WHAT SHALL I BELIEVE

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WHAT SHALL I BELIEVE

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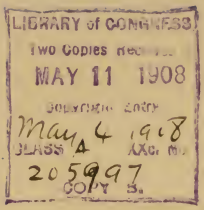

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INTRODUCTION

Religion is not merely an affair of the feelings. Every religion has its articles of belief, as essential to it as is the material body to man's life.

Many preachers of our Christian churches fail to realize how welcome by their audiences is a clear presentation of some solid truth. The notion that congregations do not want doctrinal preaching means no more than that they do not want ill-digested matter, nor doctrines which transcend the region of practical thought.

The addresses herewith presented to the reading public were presented to hearers in the Second Presbyterian Church in Auburn, N. Y., in the year 1907. The audiences which listened to them indicated that they met a need and a desire. The reader is asked to have in mind that the addresses were prepared for hearers, rather than readers. Each is, of course, independent of every other, and it is quite possible that slight variations may appear where they

touch any common matter, and possibly no one address presents the opinion of all. These sermons are not to be understood as presenting collectively a system of theology. Nor are they separate *treatises* on the subject handled. They were and are merely popular treatments of important matters concerning which some Christians may be asking: What Shall I Believe?

A. M. D.

Auburn, N. Y.
January 31, 1908.

CONCERNING BELIEF

WHAT SHALL I BELIEVE

CONCERNING BELIEF

BY ALLEN MACY DULLES

One of the most amusing incidents in the story of Don Quixote is that which occurs between this hero and the merchants whom he meets on the public road. He rushes toward them and summons all the world to conflict, so far as the whole world does not admit that there is no more beautiful woman in the world than the Queen of La Mancha, the incomparable Dulcinea of Toboso. When the merchants, somewhat surprised at the sudden summons, desired to see a picture of this beautiful lady before offering their compliments, Don Quixote replies: "If I show her to you, what value then would there be in a confession of a truth of which you have such clear and convincing proof? What I demand is exactly this: that you shall, without seeing, believe, confess, swear by, and fight for this lady. If you will not do it, then prepare for

battle. Come here, you proud and cursed rascals."

There is current in high quarters to-day, a notion of belief which is the counterpart of that demanded by the famous Don.

Belief, or faith, is defined as the acceptance as true of that which we have no means of knowing whether it is true or not; the value and virtue of faith is that its object is unknown, even unknowable. Faith, or belief, is man's attitude or relation to the unknown, the uncertain, the unproved and unprovable.

Professor Santayana, of Harvard, says:

"Religion must withdraw its pretension to be dealing with matters of fact."

Faith, in popular language, accepts something as true which is not known to be true. Locke says that "Faith is the assent to any proposition as true, of whose truth we have no certain knowledge." Hamilton says: "We know on reason, and we believe on authority." Quite similar are the definitions in the "Century," and some other dictionaries.

Without dispute, these definitions may correspond to the *"popular"* use of the word "belief," but certainly they are misconceptions of what belief or faith is, in the Christian Religion. Of course, there is no law which we can call to our assistance to secure

the use of any word, in only one sense, with only one significance. However desirable for thought it is that a word be like a coin, stamped and with only one value, yet no word is this in a living language.

Therefore we cannot deny either the right or possibility of using the word belief as a synonym for guess, or conjecture, a supposition, or mental venture and the like.

But, we have a right to inquire in what sense anyone uses this word, and a right to require that he use it consistently and with reasonable limitation of significance. What any writer means by faith or belief must be learned from the meaning which the whole text or context makes evident.

While, therefore, we cannot hinder any man from using belief as expressing a state of doubt, and faith as characterized by an uncertainty and questionableness, yet we have a right to distinguish this use from that which is meant by the New Testament "pistis," and what, therefore, the words "belief" and "faith" which translate it, should mean in the Christian Religion.

As Shailer Mathews says (Church and the Changing Order), faith deals with facts. He quotes Paul's words: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain."

The substance of the word "pistis" is persuasion. It is a persuasion that something is fact, that some one is trustworthy, true. Hundreds of times this root is so used in the New Testament.

"Persuading the things concerning the kingdom." "We persuade men," says Paul. That was his mission, to persuade men to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and in the passive sense, we have "to be persuaded," "to trust in," "have confidence in." "Being confident, persuaded, of this one thing." "Having this confidence," "no condence in the flesh," neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." And so it means obedience which is the manifestation of this persuaded state. "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

Thus we can deduce a definition of what belief or faith means from the New Testament.

It is a *persuasion* based upon *evidence as its cause,* which has *self-commitment* to that which is believed *as its result;* or, belief is the mental, emotional, volitional response which man makes to evidence concerning truth and reality.

That which is believed is *true, real, fact.*

It is believed and trusted in because of rational grounds or evidence. *This belief is manifest* in self-commitment, or trust. That which characterizes belief is that it is a persuasion in which man's total nature is involved, always including the will and the affections, as well as the intellect. But, as no psychology can separate or isolate these, no one of these is lacking in belief. If there is ever an apparent absence of the persuasion of the intellect it is only an appearance, or else we cannot call the persuasion faith or belief.

As an intellectual persuasion, we may somewhat anticipatorily say, there is in belief also a *consciousness that one is or has been persuaded.* It is this that separates it in some perceptible degree from knowledge which psychologically lays emphasis on the resulting certainty rather than on the process of persuasion, or the fact that the assurance *is a result.* It is, however, we at once say, not true to linguistic custom, to deny that belief names the certainty of the mind. I believe that Julius Cæsar entered Britain. I believe that Kingston was shaken by an earthquake. I believe that the forces of nature operate in accord with one another. I believe that the law of gravitation operates

on the moon, as well as on the earth. I believe that behind and beneath and within all forces is the will of God. I am persuaded that these are facts. I believe these are true. These ideas have the equivalent, the coefficient, of reality for me.

My belief is my confidence, my assurance, my certainty. That belief is extended and names further the *valuation which is put on what is known,* does not diminish the fact that at the basis of faith is always that which is known, through experience or testimony, or some other way.

Faith or belief names that soul power which aroused, guided and controlled by facts of the reason and evidence, advances from the past into the future; from the already experienced, to that which lies beyond.

As the tree grows upward, by means of its roots, so does faith grow upward, rooted in the truth. We are not for a moment restricting this power, this faith, to prescribed, sense-defined limits. As a soul-power, it is alive and grows and stretches beyond its past self. It roots in evidence, but grasps after what is beyond.

By belief or faith man advances into the region which he calls the unseen, exceeds the

boundaries of that which is necessary, transcends the ordinary reaches of human thought, projects himself into the so-called unknown, leaps across the chasm which experience has not yet closed up, anticipates realities of which as yet he only has a glimmering experience, and apprehends that which the senses do not immediately possess.

But this power is fed and nourished by those roots and tendrils which find evidence and find sustenance in what God has revealed, all that whereby He makes Himself and His world evident. Faith lives from facts. It is especially this opinion we would emphasize. To be true to the New Testament use of the word "pistis," we eliminate that skepticism which is too often supposed to be its characteristic feature.

Some of our poetry has made us familiar with the notion that somehow faith or belief is a blind groping. It is a misuse of the word faith or belief to use it to name this blind groping on the "altar-stairs that slope through darkness up to God." This is *seeking faith;* it is not yet faith. Faith is not the casting of the soul out into the unknown as a child flings a stone from a sling.

This projection of our confidence into the future obeys the laws of reason, of our moral

nature, of our self. We must repudiate the definition a prominent writer gives when he says, faith is a "taking for granted that the promises of Jesus are true in the hopes of finding them so." This reverses the scripture order, hope rests on faith, and not faith on hope.

When Tennyson says: "We have but faith, we cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see," he gives expression to this common misuse of the words "knowledge" and "faith." For knowledge is not restricted to what we see; nor indeed, is our faith limited to that which we do not see.

The child has just as much confidence and faith in its father when he is holding his hand as when he may be removed from him. The more we know God, the more we believe and have faith in Him.

As Prof. Ormond has said,—"What our judgment asserts is either the truth of the falsehood of some presented content." He says,—"We either know or believe a thing to be objectively true or false. We commit ourselves to its objective truth."

And, he says again quite correctly: "When I know, I know a thing to be true; when I believe, I believe a thing to be true." Robert Flint does not go too far when he says,—

"Belief should be coextensive with knowledge, coincident with truth." And he rightly characterizes this opposition of belief and knowledge, faith and reason, as religious agnosticism.

Whatever real difference there is between belief and knowledge (and we do not deny that difference, though we have not time to discuss it) it is not a difference which makes belief independent of adequate evidence.

When Dr. Moore says, "we believe on evidence that is scientifically uncertain," it must be answered there *is no* scientifically certain evidence. Every scientist knows (e. g. see Jevons' Principles of Science) that no evidence gets beyond the region of the probable. Only abstract reasoning is theoretically certain.

Is there, of the ten thousand things which we say we know, one in a hundred which we could demonstrate? This division of the consciousness into "I know" and "I believe," is an unphilosophical conception of knowledge which is without foundation. What we call our knowledge is not based on any surer premises than our faith. You know that the earth moves through space, but you know it upon authority. You know that there is a city called Peking,—you know it, probably,

on testimony. Only the merest fragment of what we call knowledge is capable, if any at all is, of absolute demonstration in the scientific sense of the word demonstration.

Knowledge and belief are both a persuasion of the truth which is based upon evidence. The common element of belief and knowledge is this confidence, this persuasion concerning the truth. It is said: Knowledge is more certain than belief. Again and again, people say "When I am certain, I know. When I am not certain, I believe." No one can prevent such popular usage.

But, so far as I am not certain I do not believe; I *try* to believe and I have no right to say that I do believe, however desirous I may be of believing. To do this,—to use a frank word,—is to be dishonest. Just in proportion as my persuasion is absolute, do I believe. If my persuasion is only partial, then the prayer must go up,—"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And this help comes through some influence, some evidence, whereby I am thoroughly persuaded and made confident.

One may come to persuade himself that he believes in the unknown and the unknowable, but strict honesty with self will assure you that it is a mere say so, and a mere *willing-*

ness to believe, turned by some effort into a self-persuasion that one does believe.

My confidence in the uniformity of the operation of the laws of nature is not based upon any absolute demonstration, nor can my experience of yesterday be an infallible witness of what shall be my experience tomorrow. But the experiences have awakened a confidence proportionate to their worth, so that I act in conformity with this so-called law of uniformity. So my confidence in the existence and providence of God is based upon experiences and evidences in the past which are satisfactory, which give me confidence.

Pragmatism, under distinguished leadership in this country, and under Mr. Schiller in England (see his "Studies in Humanism") is, indeed, widely dominant, and must prevail so far as skepticism destroys the positive foundations on which faith once was supposed to rest.

"Faith," says Dr. Schiller, "is essentially a personal affair, an adventure, if you please, which originates in individual options, in choices on which men set their hearts and stake their lives. We must start from assumptions which we have not proved, which we cannot prove, which can only be verified

after we have trusted in them. We start then with the postulates of faith and transmute them slowly into axioms of reason."

As already said, there is and can be no law against using faith in this sense, and the word will continue to be so used, to name a *willingness to venture on evidence which is not proof.* That man is constantly required to do this, is beyond question.

But what the pragmatist does not consider is, that this willingness, except it be a *rational willingness, which acts on sufficient and reasonable evidence* is, so far as insane faith, is aberglaube, superstition.

Faith is not mere volition or "will to believe," it is not "the wish that is father to the thought," it is not the child of desire, but of evidence. Though desire be the father, evidence alone is the mother.

Faith or belief must be in proportion to and in degree of evidence or proof. It does not diminish with proof. Faith grows with evidence. It feeds on it. It is strong not through lack of evidence, but with its possession. There may be a measure of truth when William James says "Belief must always outstrip scientific evidence."

But, it can never go further, and be rational, than the *evidence requires and war-*

rants. Indeed, faith does not outstrip evidence or proof, except as the tree outstrips its roots. To use Prof. James' illustration: if my faith tells me I can leap a chasm, unless that faith have my strength and agility as its basis, I shall fall into the ditch. In such a case the will and desire may stimulate the strength and enter into the faith as elements. Yet the faith or belief that I *can,* is a persuasion immediately dependent on my assurance as to my strength and agility.

"The starting point of faith," says Westcott, "is knowledge." And, although he adds, "All action involves an advance into the unseen," yet it is an advance which reason makes reasonable, and which is necessarily an advance which has the stimulus of evidence behind it.

Take away this rational element, and faith is in no wise distinct from any insane craving. God becomes but "the shadow of our own desire, and the dream of a worm in the dark." Facts, truth, knowledge, are absolutely essential to Christian faith.

Paul would certainly contradict Dr. Moore when he says: "Christianity is a hypothesis to be adopted with the expectation of verification." It is not a mere "assumption" underlying all practical life. We can-

not admit that "belief or faith makes no claim to scientific recognition." Paul did not go about Asia telling people that perhaps Jesus was the Christ and that they might act on this hypothesis. He persuaded men to believe by giving them evidence. It is not correct to say that man has faith "in an uncertain enterprise." So far as it is uncertain man cannot have faith in it. He has some faith and some doubt; and the doubt, not the faith, grows with the uncertainty. In these agnostic days it is actually asserted that the greater the doubt the greater the faith. So-called definitions of belief, that doubt is a necessary element of it, seem almost to make belief an absurdity. Do I believe a thing to be true because I doubt concerning its truth? Do I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because I doubt whether He is the Son of God? Do I believe that the sun will rise to-morrow because I doubt whether the sun will rise to-morrow?

The moment you insert doubt into the mind, belief is so far weakened. You know this in all your practical experiences. You believe to-day, for example, that Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy. If you have come under the influence of criticism you

doubt this. So far as you doubt it, you do not believe it.

There are too many people who confuse "I believe" with "I am willing to believe"; who say that faith is equal to "I want to believe." Here is a place where Protestants certainly, as well as all lovers of truth, must take their stand and say that belief depends upon rational evidence, and we must resist any effort to exalt belief or faith by making it an act of will whereby, apart from rational evidence, I say I believe that which I doubt.

Doubt is just as distinct from belief as ignorance is from knowledge, and equally destructive. To be partly persuaded is not to believe. "I doubt that Jesus is my Saviour," does not help me to say, "I believe that He is." To say, I doubt whether Shakspere wrote the plays ascribed to him, does not help me to say that I believe that he is their author.

If the existence of God is doubtful to you, you do not believe it. You merely say you do, and try to persuade yourself to believe what you desire. If the Bible is to you a fallible book, you cannot by any means honestly make it an infallible book.

If Jesus is not in very truth to you a mediator between God and man, no possible

saying so can make Him such. We have cultivated a fictitious,—I might also say an infamous—habit of saying, "I believe," when we do not believe. This is a habit which we have in religion, which in secular affairs we would denounce as iniquitous.

Again I repeat it, religious belief is not characterized by doubt, or by insufficient evidence. The evidence may be of a different sort in some matters of belief from that given in reference to other matters of belief, but without some evidence it is nothing less than criminal to believe.

The blind man in the gospel story illustrates this. He asserted to the Jews,—"One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see." Jesus came to him later and asked him,—"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He very properly asked,—"Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" His faith came when Jesus said,—"It is he that talketh with thee."

Thomas is not to be censured because he demanded evidence. It may be that the kind of evidence he demanded is not altogether commendable, but even so, our Lord recognized the right of evidence when he permitted Thomas to touch Him. And then followed

after the evidence, the full confession,—"My Lord and my God."

When (as Flint quotes) Professor Thornwell says: "Evidence alone should be the measure of assent," I add, this is merely intellectual honesty. There must be sufficient evidence. This sufficiency may not be found merely in the quantity of the evidence, but in its quality. Indeed, evidence is sufficient which satisfies the mind or the reason of men.

As Professor Ormond says,—"*When we accept anything as true we accept it as being congruous with experience as a whole.*" This is essential to faith. It is certainly a variable matter, what evidence, both as to kind and quality, satisfies the rational inquiry. And the demand for evidence may indicate a defect of the reason when it exceeds what is in the case theoretically necessary.

For example, the Jews demanded of Jesus Christ other evidence than that which He was constantly giving them as to His being the Messiah. But the fact that evidence out of moral proportion may be demanded by some, does not do away with the fact of necessity of evidence in the matter of belief.

This matter of evidence is very commonly

misunderstood. People talk in a careless way about proof, as though there were many matters concerning which absolute proof can be given. The fact is, proof or evidence is simply some attendant upon a fact or idea whereby it is made acceptable to my reason. The evidence that Julius Cæsar entered Britain is simply the sum total of all which can be said with reference to that fact, whereby it is carried forcibly and persuasively to my mind.

In matters of religion, as in other matters, it is not only our right, but it is our duty to ask for evidence.

The cure for error, whether in reference to what we say we know, or what we say we believe, is evidence. We have no right to believe what reason, acting upon evidence, denies. The age of reason will be the age of faith.

When Paul writes,—"We walk by faith, and not by sight," he is not thereby saying that in faith there does not enter a rational conclusion based upon evidence, but simply that the evidence is not that of a physical kind. Faith is, and must be rational.

It may be asked here, does not belief go beyond evidence? Does it not draw con-

clusions which are larger than the premises? What do we mean by "beyond evidence"? Evidence is that which satisfies the mind of the truth and reality of any proposition. It makes truth evident, clear. Belief cannot go beyond evidence in this respect, unless it is going to wander, lost, like a meteor, among the stars.

The evidence which satisfies me, may not satisfy you. I am not drawing conclusions beyond the evidence when I conclude that which you fail to conclude. The evidence was all at hand long before Newton concluded concerning the law of gravitation; but Newton drew no conclusion beyond the evidence.

The evidence was all at hand when the Jews crucified Christ. But John did not go beyond the evidence when he called Jesus the Son of God.

We sometimes say that faith ventures beyond knowledge. Again we must be cautioned as to what we mean by knowledge. When Columbus concluded that it would be safe to sail west in order to reach the coast of Asia, you may call this a venture of faith; but to Columbus it was a venture based upon evidence which satisfied him.

The evidence was so convincing that no discouragements could turn him from his purpose.

Faith is not (Dr. Moore) a willingness to assume for moral gain. It is just as iniquitous to assume for moral gain, as for financial, unless the so-called assumption be warranted by evidence, by fact.

When it is objected by some that if faith rest on evidence then every doubter can say: I have not time nor ability to investigate; I would say: by just such arguments the Church of Rome supports her claims. Every error can appeal to such faith. A man should take time. But, things which man should believe are always accompanied by sufficient rational evidence. God bears witness to all truth which is really essential to life and salvation.

New Testament belief is not guess work. Belief is not hope. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is rather a description of the hope which has faith as its basis. It is "*faith which is the substance* of things hoped for," which is the evidence or proof of the unseen. We hope concerning the unseen because of faith in God, the revealed and known God.

It is an incorrect use of language to say that "faith takes for granted that the prom-

ises of Christ are true in the hope of finding them so." This is *hope,* it is *not* faith.

Paul tells us, "The promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen;" Christ Jesus is Himself the great Amen, the Eternal Verity. Faith is not a leap into the dark. Faith has a firm foundation laid for it in God's word and work. It will not hurt us to believe less in quantity, provided we really believe intensely. This age wants conviction not creeds.

The times seem to encourage a specious dishonesty in creeds.

Mr. R. H. Hutton has said that reciting the Creed was not actually a statement of conviction, but "an act of intellectual adoration," "a solemn act of spiritual survey over the foundations of faith." He declared that "it fortifies the soul to remember facts on which Christianity has been based, even when one doubts them." The New York Evening Post recently called attention to the suggestion of Dr. Allen that the difficulty of professing a Creed might be avoided by singing the Articles!

Think of it! A religion based on facts which one doubts! What kind of religion is that?

Religion, to be real, must derive its suste-

nance from realities. I am not seeking to indicate what these realities are, whether facts past or present, but take away the truth of facts and the influence which they exerted as supposed facts ceases.

No mere God of the imagination, known to be imaginary, can produce religion, because real belief, a belief in His reality is gone. Religion depends on reality and the belief in reality which makes itself, in some way, evident.

Here, some one may inquire, does not the statement that belief is a rational persuasion due to evidence remove belief out of the moral realm? And does this not do away with the volitional element? We answer, —No.

So far, indeed, as the will is concerned, we must regard the bald statement, "Will to believe," as dangerous, unless this means simply willingness to believe. To believe aside from evidence, by an act of will, is in the highest degree immoral, and is deserving of the censure which Shelley, in his "Queen Mab," and which Clifford pronounced against it.

It is evident that I believe many things against my will. For example, I believe some

dreadful news of a disaster to those dear to me. The will affects belief in several ways, by voluntary attention, and also by an attitude of soul which is not antagonistic to the truth.

Unquestionably, the emotional nature when it is aroused affects our susceptibility to evidence so that we are slow, or hesitate to accept that evidence at its full force.

We cannot, indeed, always say how this emotional eagerness will affect one. My eagerness to know that a ship, which is overdue, has arrived, may render me over-skeptical or over-credulous; but it certainly affects my relation to the report of the fact. The attitude of desire affects our relation to evidence.

The word "belief" has as its root "belieben," or belove. A willingness to receive is quite necessary in the matter of belief. More so perhaps than it is in the matter of knowledge. Here, what Baldwin says is of force. "In faith the volitional motive is a sense of worth, the epistemological a consideration of truth." So that the will may help or hinder the sense of assurance and confidence. Worth and truth cannot conflict.

Our Lord said, "Ye will not come unto

me." The evidence which comes to one willing to believe is more satisfying than if one is unwilling to believe.

Here then, enters the moral element; that my nature, my affections, expressing themselves in my will, may bring me either into opposition to or into accord with evidence.

Paul says of some, "The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not." It is *this indifference to evidence* which makes the sin of unbelief. Paul says therefore, of those willing to be blind, that they are without excuse.

Jesus charged the Jews with sin, because He had given them evidence which only their unwillingness to receive, made them reject. Remove evidence, and there is no sin in unbelief. Faith, as Paul says, comes by hearing.

We are not warranted in excluding from belief our emotional nature. Our desires for the good that comes into our life through God and Jesus Christ,—these are parts of the evidence of the reality of God and our Saviour.

We know that bread and water sustain life. It is part of the evidence that we experience satisfaction.

It is part of the evidence concerning God

and our Saviour that we derive, in the exercise of faith, spiritual life.

As Goethe said,—"Was fruchtbar ist, ist wahr." There is a very real sense in which it is true that seeing is believing. I do not say that this belief based upon evidence, like every other psychological state, may not be subject to waves which disturb its tranquility. Yet, beneath any superficial unrest there is the mighty persuasion which asserts itself against a superficial current of thought or feeling.

> "In the maddening maze of things,
> And tossed by storm and flood,
> To one fixed hope my spirit clings,
> I know that God is good."

The struggle between faith and doubt may be compared to that between the tide of the ocean which rises to meet and to conquer the downward current of a river.

That our belief may have to struggle with counter-currents of doubt is a fact of common experience, which should not really disturb our faith any more than we are disturbed when we see the captain of a vessel sailing on a tack which takes him in the opposite direction from his harbor. But the doubt does not make the faith, it unmakes it.

The faith which is *based* on evidence, which extracts from it its significance, the spirit which has within it the spirit of the testimony of God, the belief which comes when we listen to facts as interpreted by the Spirit of God,—such persuasion in the end must conquer all doubt. This is the victory.

It is this assurance which enables one to venture into the unknown future, saying "My times are in His hands." It is this faith which enables the believer to die in peace, and in triumph because he knows that his Redeemer liveth.

This faith steps out "on the seeming void and finds the rock beneath," because it knows that God is everywhere. It is by this faith, in Tennyson's words, that "We live the life beyond the bridge, and serve the infinite."

> "As blind nestlings, unafraid,
> Stretch open-mouthed to every shade
> By which their downy dream is stirred,
> Taking it for the parent bird."

The evidence upon which our faith rests is multiform. It may come through many channels. Ultimately, it has as its source the spirit of truth.

"So sometimes comes to soul and sense,
The feeling that is evidence,
That near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries."

We may be blind to the evidence, and live in doubt when we should be certain, as we often see a lower stratum of clouds moving in a direction contrary to the higher order of things. But, he who has evidence of the highest, dwells, by faith, in the celestial world.

Man comes to value fact and phenomena at their worth to his soul.

CONCERNING GOD

CONCERNING GOD

BY WILLIS JUDSON BEECHER

"Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth thee" (Neh. ix, 6, R. V.).

These words are a section of the record of the prayer uttered at the reinstatement of the old law under Nehemiah. They are, with the whole prayer, a statement of the doctrine of Theism as that doctrine was held in Israel in the fifth century before Christ and in earlier centuries, and as it is still held by the adherents of the religion of Jehovah, whether Jews or Christians or Mohammedans.

Our grandmothers used to tell their little children of a Being who made the world, a Being who is like us in that he knows and understands and purposes and loves and approves or disapproves, but who is unlike us in that he is infinite; a Being who is not at one time in one place and at another time in another place, but who is everywhere all the time; a Being who knows all our conduct,

and can do anything, and never makes a mistake or does wrong; a Father who cares for us and desires our love. When the little ones became old enough to go to church they heard the minister preach about this same wonderful Being. Their childish imaginations were hospitable to thoughts of this kind, and their minds became filled with ideas of God; sometimes through mistaken teaching with distorted and cruel ideas, but normally with conceptions of unimaginable greatness and purity and loving-kindness. Of course we little ones had no adequate understanding of these ideas; but we possessed them, and they stimulated our ambition to understand, and they had a wholesome mental and moral effect.

This old doctrine of Theism—the doctrine that the supreme energy of the universe is an infinite Person, almighty, holy, self-revealing, and a moral ruler—is too large a subject for one brief sermon. But let me call your attention to three propositions included in it.

I. First, Theism as a doctrine includes whatever of truth there is in what we are accustomed to describe as "the law of the persistence of energy."

Doubtless the study of the natural sciences

and of evolution has led our contemporaries to go beyond the men of the past in emphasizing the idea of Cause, continuity of force, uniformity of natural law. None the less the men of the past possessed this truth. In particular, theology has taught it for millenniums. The difference here between a theist and an agnostic consists in the fact that the theist believes the supreme Energy to be personal, while the agnostic denies this, or refuses to commit himself.

Test these assertions by the text.

"Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest them all."

Have we not here the "conception of cause, apart from particular causes"? The Cause is a personal will, to be sure, but it is none the less Cause. Have we not here energy persisting, bringing into existence and keeping in existence everything that is? The prophet says that this "cause," this "energy" is the personal Jehovah, but you can detach this part of his proposition. Detaching it, how does the remainder differ from the current scientific doctrine of the persistence of energy?

See what the text becomes if for the personal term "JEHOVAH" we substitute the term which Mr. Herbert Spencer offers as an equivalent, "the Power manifested through phenomena." He spells Power with the big P.

"Thou art the Power manifested through phenomena, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest them all."

Can you find fault with that, as an up-to-date scientific statement? Is it not precisely what every scientist affirms concerning "the Power manifested through phenomena," and what it has done, and is doing? The Theism of Nehemiah includes this up-to-date proposition, whatever it may include additional to this.

In the familiar catechism answer we are taught that

"The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

And a supplementary answer includes in the divine decrees,

"His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions."

This is Calvinistic theology. It uses terms that are personal and theological. If we detach these terms, leaving the statement of fact by itself, then the decrees become processes, purpose becomes causative operation, foreordain becomes necessitate, and we have something like this:

"The processes of the Power manifested through phenomena are its eternal causative action, according to its own nature, whereby for its own manifestation it necessitates whatsoever comes to pass." This includes "its most fit and powerful preserving and controlling all its creatures and all their actions."

This is not a bad formulation of the received scientific opinion; for science, remember, makes the realm of causation to include free beings and their actions. From the theological proposition omit the wise and holy will of God, and the remainder is the scientific proposition. Men may sneer at this teaching when they think of it as formulated theology; they may hate it when they think of it as formulated Calvinism; but they accept it as a matter of course when they think of it as formulated science.

Did Nehemiah or the authors of the Westminster standards see in natural law all that scientific minds now see? Probably not, though we have no means of making measure-

ments. But they saw the essential truth that is in natural law, and they formulated it, though in theological terms.

My affirmation is that Theism as a doctrine includes so much of the doctrine of the persistence of energy as it finds to be true. Theism does not concern itself with the conflicting theories concerning evolution and other natural processes. In this matter of universal causation Theism and Science are alike confronted with the question of the free will of God or of man, and the difficulties are the same for both. Whatever will solve the difficulties for science will solve them for theology. The theological proposition, however, includes more than the scientific proposition. If professed agnostics deny that the Power manifested in phenomena is spiritual and personal, Theism replies: In this you are not true agnostics; you are asserting that which you do not know. If they say that the phenomena and the physical force are all that we know, Theism takes issue with them on the question of fact. It declares that we know that there is something more ultimate than natural laws, that these are not Deity but only the processes in which Deity operates. It affirms that evolution cannot

account for all things, but that it needs to be itself accounted for.

II. As a second proposition, Theism as a doctrine includes whatever of truth there is in the idea of God as a spiritual Being immanent in all things.

When people speak of the immanence of God, I think that different persons intend different meanings. Some seem to have the idea of Deity as a sort of tenuous ether diffused everywhere. Others, apparently, say that God is immanent as a euphemistic way of saying that there is no God, but only atheistic natural law. Others exhibit a crude pantheism, holding that the universe is God and that there is no God save the universe. Nevertheless there is a true doctrine of the divine immanence. To the idea of infinite force exerting itself in all things add the idea that this force is spiritual in its nature, and you have a doctrine of God as immanent. Or, if you prefer, say that there is an infinite Being who exerts the force; though in that case the real ultimate Force is the Being who exerts rather than the force which is exerted. The theistic doctrine of the immanence of Deity is that God is omnipresent Spirit; that the supreme universal Energy is of the nature

of spiritual Being, having analogies in our human experiences of mind and heart and purpose rather than in physical phenomena; that infinite Spirit exerts the power manifested through phenomena, or, if you prefer, is that Power.

Mr. Luther Burbank, distinguished for the wonderful transformations in plant life which he has succeeded in producing, is credited with the following utterance:

"All my investigations have led me away from the idea of a dead material universe tossed about by various forces, to that of a universe which is absolutely all force, life, soul, thought, or whatever name we may choose to call it. Every atom, molecule, plant, animal or planet is only an aggregation of organized unit forces, held in place by stronger forces, thus holding them for a time latent, though teeming with inconceivable power." "The universe is not half dead, but all alive" (*Congregationalist* of Jan. 12, 1907 page 48).

Get hold of this thought. Here is a bulk of something, a fragment of mineral, a piece of wood or other vegetable product, what you will. It seems inert, mere lifeless matter. In reality it is a magazine of stored energy. It seems powerless simply because its energy is held in equilibrium by other energy. Change the conditions, and it may be found to contain a whole earthquake of explosive

force; or the energy may manifest itself in gentler forms, for example in light or warmth or color or growth of plant or animal. This infinite energy, whether manifested or latent, existing in the whole universe and at every point in the universe—what is it?

We enter upon no philosophical answer to this question. We advance no theory as to the ultimate nature of realities, or as to the Absolute, or Unconditioned Being, or Infinite Existence, or the Soul of the universe, or the Life of the universe, or its essence, or its organic principle. In this region Theism has just one great question to ask, and it is a question for plain people as well as for philosophers. Its question is this: Is the supreme Energy spiritual? In its manifestations are we to recognize merely the physical process of moving things, or are we also to recognize intelligence and emotion and purpose?

Mr. Burbank's answer, as just read, is that the universe "is absolutely all force, life, soul, thought, or whatever name we may choose to call it." Not knowing his point of view, I do not know exactly how much this means; but it can hardly mean less than that the manifestations of the supreme Energy everywhere indicate intelligence and purpose.

And I suppose that this at present is the general verdict of scientific men. To affirm that the supreme Energy is not intelligent is to go beyond the extremest range of agnosticism; it is utter and groundless dogmatism. The utmost extreme to which an agnostic can go is that of saying that he does not know whether the supreme Energy is intelligent, and I think that agnostics who go as far as this are as rare as snowbanks in July. I once saw in July the remains of a snowbank hidden away in a sunless ravine, but I never saw another.

A man may supposably convince himself that the entering in of intelligence as a part of the phenomena of our earth came at an advanced stage of evolution, that it took millions of years for the earth to evolve up to the point of having intelligent inhabitants. But such a man is not likely to hold that this was the beginning of intelligence in the universe; for he will probably hold that the same stage of evolution was reached in numberless other planets uncounted ages before the evolution of the earth began. And how could such evolution go forward except as guided by preexisting intelligence? How could it exhibit intelligence unless there were intelligence to exhibit? I think that men were never more

firmly convinced than now that the manifestation of force which we see everywhere is not merely mechanical, but is in some real sense intelligent and purposive.

Nehemiah's view in the matter is clear. He represents that the Energy which made and upholds the heavens and the earth is nothing else than Jehovah himself; and that Jehovah, being the God of Israel, loving Israel and mankind, carrying forward plans in the material universe and in human history, is intelligent and spiritual in his being.

This same conception of a supreme spiritual Energy immanent in all that exists is either expressed or implied in all the numerous passages of the Old and the New Testaments which speak of the omnipresence and the omniscience of God; and it has been among the commonplaces of all the great teachers of theistic theology.

The conception of universal Force as of the nature of spiritual Being, lying hidden everywhere, and sometimes manifesting itself in personal forms, has a place of some sort in most of the inferior religions. Every fetich has its personal character, malignant or benign. Ancestor worship has an aspect of personal relationship to the Power that brought us into being. The very essence of all the

forms of Animism is the recognition of supposed spiritual existence in the phenomena we observe, and of our supposed ability sometimes to catch glimpses of such existence. All the nymphs of water and wood and mountain are witnesses to this operation of man's religious instincts. When men worship the powers of nature, the sun or the ocean or the storms, they think of these as exercising intelligence and emotion and purpose. Some of the gods thus worshiped have been good and some bad, but whether good or bad, the worship is a recognition of marks of personality in the ultimate Power that manifests itself in all things.

This doctrine of God as immanent in the universe is sometimes spoken of as essential Pantheism; and we are referred to the Theosophies of India as giving the best exposition of it. In regard to this I must plead ignorance. But I think that I cannot be mistaken in saying that Pantheism has a wide range; that while in its highest forms it is scarcely distinguishable from Theism, its lower forms have all the vices and none of the vitality of proper Polytheism; that in its doctrine of the divine immanence it ranges from the conception of God as a form of matter or as an all-pervasive, emotionless, purposeless

Fate to that of an omnipresent infinite intelligence; that its Nirvana—its goal of human existence—ranges from blank annihilation to something like the peace of eternal blessedness. We are all familiar with Tennyson's much quoted stanza:

> Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Mr. Tennyson correctly presents this as the vision toward which "the higher Pantheism" is desperately struggling. But it is a goal that Theism reached long ago. It is a teaching that has been one of the commonplaces of Theism from the time of Abraham and earlier.

III. And so we come to a third proposition. Theism as a doctrine includes whatever of truth there is in the idea of God as transcendent over all things; and especially of God as the interested, self-revealing Ruler and Saviour of men.

It is not only true that there is an infinite Power back of all things, and that this Power is Spirit; it is also true that this Power, this Spirit, is self-revealing to the spirits whom he has brought into being.

If one is convinced that the changes which manifest the supreme Cause are not the merely mechanical moving of things, but are the intelligent moving of things for a purpose, why should he doubt that the intelligent Mover is a Being who is interested in the universe which he thus perpetuates? Why deny that he distinguishes between right and wrong? that he is, to use Matthew Arnold's fine phrase, "a Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness"? in other words, that he is moral Ruler for the world? Why deny that he may have kindly or disapproving feelings toward his creatures? or that he may take especial means for revealing himself to them?

The human religious instincts have always made demand for this character in the Deities that men have worshiped. It is this that has given some vitality to even the polytheisms and other inferior religions. The gods of the nations have been thought of as emotional beings, taking an interest in their worshipers —sometimes a malignant or cruel or selfish interest, but an interest of some kind. When men have permitted their monotheistic theology to become too abstract, then they have turned aside to the worship of Mother Nature, or have interposed saints or angels or

the Virgin between themselves and Deity. The human mind cannot content itself with a mere philosophical Deity; it must have a God that watches and cares and loves.

Nehemiah holds this view. The Being whom he addresses as the maker and sustainer of heaven and earth is the one whom he thinks of as the national God of Israel, a Being of emotions, who loves right and hates wrong, who is capable of being pleased or displeased; and who is revealing himself to mankind through his dealings with Israel, his chosen people. The same doctrine appears elsewhere in the Old and New Testaments, and in the works of the theologians. These teach that the self-revelation of God is through all the universe as a medium, but especially through the history of Israel, and through Jesus Christ, and through the Scriptures as the record concerning Israel and the Christ, and through the Holy Spirit as interpreting the universe and the sacred history and Christ and the Scriptures.

Is there any reason for being inhospitable to this teaching? Men agree that the Power manifested through phenomena has used the Greeks and their literature to accomplish certain results in human civilization, and the Romans and their literature to accomplish

certain other results, and other peoples and their literatures to accomplish yet other results; why should not some people be especially used by the infinite Power for the self-revelation of that Power to men? and why should not that people be Israel? And why should not the revelation thus made be recognizable and credible?

And if the Energy that operates in natural law has intelligence and purpose and feeling, must we not conceive of it, or rather of him, as the Master of natural law, and not the slave? Why should we deny that this Energy, in its processes of self-revelation, may even transcend natural law as understood by finite men?

If we have this conception of a thinking, feeling, purposing Energy, existing everywhere and maintaining all things in existence, then a necessary part of the conception is that the Energy is capable of personal relations with such other thinking, feeling, purposing beings as may anywhere exist. There may be fellowship between the infinite Spirit and finite spirits.

"Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

Prayer and a response to it may be realities. Between God and us there may be reciprocal love, and a common interest in common aims, and mutual rejoicings and sympathies. He is our sovereign, acknowledging responsibilities toward us, and holding us responsible. And this is practically the great thing in theistic doctrine. God immanent in the universe, the infinite First Cause, the Essence of all that is or shall be, is a theme for high thinking; but whether we can do high thinking or not, we have to do hour by hour with God, the Companion and Helper and Judge of men, with God who claims our allegiance and trust and love and obedience.

We make a mistake if we confine our thinking to either of the two conceptions—God immanent or God transcendent. God is infinite, and finite terms are inadequate to express him, and yet we have none but finite terms. We speak of the hand of God, the finger of God, his eye, his ear, his voice, his spoken command. In our human way of speaking, that which is unworthy is conceived of as low, and that which is excellent as high; and we therefore speak of God as exalted, as dwelling in the skies. We conceive him as omnipresent, and yet we speak of his local manifestation anywhere as his coming to that

place; and when we lack the consciousness of his sympathy we speak of his being absent, or of his hiding his face. We represent him as sitting on a throne, as arising to attend to affairs, as mustering armies, as surrounded by a retinue, as doing the things that a human king does. Of course we intend all this as figure of speech, though as figure which stands for something that is most utterly real; but we are constantly in danger of mistaking the figure of speech for the reality. We need to have the habit of limiting our expressions of this class by keeping in mind the idea of God as the infinite Energy immanent everywhere.

Sometimes we start to obtain an idea of the divine personality by working our way up from the best that we know of human personality. If we neglect the limiting truth that God is the infinite and universally manifested Power, we shall thus reach only finite conceptions of him.

It has been repeatedly charged of late that the Church teaches the doctrine of an "absentee God," who resides away from the human part of the universe, and concerns himself with us only when we remind him to do so. As against the Church or the Scriptures or the great teachers of Theism this

charge is monstrously untrue; but I am afraid it is true in part against many individuals who regard themselves as theists. I suspect that certain changes which have fallen under my own observation are typical. In my childhood I heard ministers preach about the immanence and the transcendence of God, about his omnipotence and his omnipresence and the difference between an infinite Person and finite persons. I did not find this wildly interesting; it was no more so than the multiplication table; but it was one of the staple commodities which the pulpit offered. Later a change came. People got to saying that these metaphysical distinctions concerning Deity were abstruse and unprofitable; that what men need to hear is that God is their Friend and Father and Saviour. Since then the teaching that I have heard concerning God has consisted mainly in anthropomorphic statements of our practical relations to him —statements that are correct and important, but which taken alone constitute an utterly one-sided doctrine. I fear that there are many Christians whose conception of God is that of a mere magnified man. I fear that others have the opposite one-sided conception, and think of God as a sort of ether or impersonal force diffused through space. In

their revulsion from inadequate conceptions like these, some doubtless come to think of God as not a reality, but rather a personification of an ideal which they have formed, or perhaps as a merely hypothetical being. When Mr. Ingersoll said that "an honest God is the noblest work of man," his implication was that God is merely a figure whom people construct in their imaginations. I am afraid that Mr. Ingersoll is not solitary in his theology.

One-sided conceptions will not answer the purpose. It is not enough to say that God is universal Energy; he is also Spirit. It is not enough to say that God is Spirit, unless we mean that he is also the Energy that sustains the universe. God is Love, you tell me? Yes, but God is also Power. If he were not infinite Power, his being Love would not count for so much as it does; if he were not infinite Love, his being Power would be a thing dreadful to contemplate. He is not merely infinite, but an infinite Person; he is not merely a Person, but an infinite Person. He is indeed the highest conceivable ideal of personality, but he is so in virtue of his being the most real Person in the universe.

Doubtless the highest form of theistic doctrine is that presented in the teachings and

the character of Jesus Christ. He is himself the completest revelation of Deity to man, God manifest in the flesh. By understanding the man Jesus we may climb up to some understanding of the divine personality. But this is because Jesus is not merely manifest in the flesh, but God manifest in the flesh. He himself concentrates the whole theistic doctrine into the phrase "our Father who art in heaven." Not our Father merely, but our Father in heaven: in heaven, and therefore far off, beyond all known space, filling the universe, the Power manifested in all things that are. Not merely the Almighty in heaven, but Father in heaven—Father, and therefore near at hand, in our hearts, in our circumstances, having tender relations with every person. Not simply Father in heaven, but our Father, recognizing our birth claim upon him, communicative, responsive. Our Father in heaven, accessible even though he is hidden in the thick mysteries of his universe! We cannot comprehend God, any more than the great statesman's baby can comprehend the statesman's mind and the vast interests that center there; but we can know God, as the baby boy knows his renowned father when the father takes care of him, and they talk and smile together.

CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

BY JAMES STEVENSON RIGGS

There is perhaps no question which Jesus ever asked having in it a more penetrating and searching significance than that one addressed to the disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, "Who say ye that I am?" I can easily in imagination picture Him as awaiting its answer with tremulous eagerness, for it was not merely an intellectual judgment that He was seeking; it was a life acknowledgment, a heart acceptance, a conception of Him which should dominate the affections and the will as well as the thought. And this is the peculiar thing about Jesus Christ, upon which I wish to fasten attention for a moment. History places before you the record of the deeds and character of its leaders and heroes. You pass judgment upon them, but they are little more to you than the names of the past. You have an intelligent conception of their relation to the events and forces which with them, and by them, brought about given issues.

Except to admire those qualities in them which brought worthy results to pass, they have for me little personal interest. It is, of course, possible to pass judgment upon Jesus Christ in the same way. Many men are content with simply an intellectual judgment of Him—calling Him "a noble man," "a great moral teacher," or even, it may be "a prophet." While all these estimates are true, it is also true that they by no means satisfy the estimate which Jesus made of Himself, and which His Church has, through all the centuries since the Resurrection made of Him. It is not simply with a name of the past that in Him we have to do. The Gospel of Jesus is not merely a record of past achievement; it is a gospel—a word of present blessing and imperative demand. It comes to us not with simply a pleasing narrative of high-minded living and noble philanthropy. It sets forth against the background of Galilee and Judæa a personality whose claim is that He is the Saviour of the world; who says "Come unto me," "Follow me." When you seek to know about Him, to place yourself so that you may critically examine Him, you very soon find that you cannot escape the spiritual discernment He brings to bear upon you. Though He lived

and spoke in a far-away land there is a timeless and climeless element in what He said. Give conscience the right of way and it urges decisions in view of what it hears. Follow the finger pointing to those decisions and you will come into that region of experience where the great abiding principles of spiritual truth hold sway—nay, more than that, where Christ Himself—who is the exponent of all spiritual truth becomes the inspiration and the source of life. Not long since a valuable book came out entitled "The Christ of History and of Experience."

That title sets forth in full the twofold aspect under which Christ may be considered —and He can never be completely considered until both aspects come under consideration. When you read a "Life of Christ" you have one aspect; when you live the life of Christ you are in the way of an ever larger understanding of the other. To stop with one aspect is to leave Him in a position entirely external. He is simply a great religious teacher who long since blessed a few lives; stirred up the hatred of the Jews, and was crucified. To take with this the other, is to make Him a living, uplifting, saving reality in your life for evermore. Of course you see that one aspect requires only mental recog-

nition and rational intelligence; the other, with these, obedience, loyalty, devotion.

In asking you to consider with me for a few moments what the Church believes concerning Jesus Christ I shall speak with reference to both aspects as they are blended in the whole New Testament. It is said sometimes that the facts of the Gospels are no longer necessary to the existence of Christianity, that if our Gospels were completely lost, Christianity would live on. If that is not a mere speculative proposition then an answer to it seems to me to lie in the preservation of the Scriptures against the repeated attacks of all forms of destructive criticism. Historical criticism may change our view of the method or time in which some of the books of the Bible came to be. No book is at all likely to be put out of the sacred canon. Nor are we in any great danger of losing any of the facts of the life of Jesus. They have been assailed, yes, nearly every one, from the Virgin birth to the Resurrection—but the Church has not given them up. Indeed, in her conflict with various philosophies and would-be scientific criticism she has found clearer reason to stand by these foundations of her faith. The Incarnation, the Galilæan ministry with all its record of work and miracle; the scenes of

the Fourth Gospel, the memories of Passion week, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, these are her sacred treasure—kept, under God, and defended by the ablest scholarship, and not seldom by her blood. Never was it possible to see more clearly than now the figure of the Christ of history as He is made to stand out against the historical background of the first century in its complex of social, civil, and religious life. If we know men by knowing them in their times; by knowing the forces with which or against which they had to labor, then we can know, and do know Him historically.

But, as I have said, in all this, we have only the data for our faith. We study the facts only that we may get a clearer view of the personality—the personality making high claims, uttering large promises, demanding moral decisions. And now if we are not to leave the whole result external to us—a mere matter of history, we must begin that quest which moves along the way of obedience and discipleship. What the church believes is the outcome of this double effort to get at the meaning of the Christ. Through the historic Christ she has come to know the essential Christ, by meeting the requirements of the truth which was so wonderfully revealed in

the life and words and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. And by the essential Christ, I mean the Christ who can satisfy the deepest needs of the heart—the Christ, who in experience is not only the ideal of the most spiritual life, but its power and its hope. This is the Christ in whom we believe. All we know and believe regarding Him is summed up in the name—Jesus Christ. Jesus representing to us the few years of earthly history in Palestine, Christ, the entire spiritual import of that history both then and now.

To an explication of that "spiritual import" I wish now to devote the rest of my time. I can ask you to look at but the merest outline, but sufficient, I hope, for you to see how vital and essential it all is. First then, the "spiritual import" of Christ is that:

I. He is to us the revelation of the character of God. I hardly have need to say to earnest, thoughtful men that God is the ultimate reality with which we all have to do. In some form of religion men have always been trying to make that fact manifest. Whatever the form, it has never been higher than the conception of God which inspired it. The shocking and pitiable cruelties of barbaric ritual; the fierce, intolerant bigotry of such defenders of faith as have not scrupled

to use the sword and the rack; the sacrificial altars which the world around have been the means of changing the disposition of Deity; the creeds which have embodied this conception or that, have all had their reason, in the last analysis, in what men have thought of God. Shadowed conceptions of God are easily possible. Nor can we think of Deity with any vital form in our thinking if we try to keep to philosophic descriptions, such as First Cause, the Absolute, Pure Being, and the like. Relations which shall be intelligible to us must be defined in terms which belong to life itself, with all its warmth and energy. When therefore, Jesus says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," with what eagerness do we look to see what the revelation is. Nor are we to look for it in simply what He says, exalted as that is; it is in *Him* that we are to look for it. You will at once see that it is God expressed in human relations that we are to fix our eyes upon. But they are inadequate to the scope of the revelation, some one may object. Yes, if you are looking for those attributes which we are led to think upon when we consider the vast expanse of the heavens, or the origin of the universe. The problems of the Spirit are the problems of life—and it is the problems of

the Spirit which Jesus came to solve. It is only as life can reveal God that Jesus reveals Him. He lived therefore, that through his life we might know God. The uniqueness of that life is in the perfection of its revelation. It is no broken light; no fragment of goodness; no half-wrought harmony of moral qualities. The more we comprehend it, the more astonishing it seems. Every right relation is flawlessly right. Both toward God and men, it has no fault. It touches neither the hardness of ascetism on one side, nor the weakness of sentimentalism on the other. It moves in the world, amid its social joys, in contact with all classes of men and women, and yet was not of the world to a degree that is difficult to realize. With a wealth of sympathy that was boundless, it inspired hope, strength and courage wheresoever it could find an open way for influence. With the sharp judgment of truth it cut to the quick the falsity and pretension of sin. It tore the mask from unreality. It yearned over those who were the victims of ignorance in spiritual things. It invited and urged men to be good. It tried patiently to write out in words and deeds that which we think ought to have been understood, the spiritual meaning of the Messiah, and in fulfillment of its great pur-

pose to reveal the very heart of God it accepted the shameful death of crucifixion rather than deflect a hair's breadth from the will of Him to whom it was consecrated. Much is being said just now against the miraculous in the New Testament, but the sinlessness of Jesus is in itself a moral miracle, and it must be reckoned with before we can make too confident assertion about the minor miracles of the Gospel story. I question whether there is any doctrine of our faith concerning Jesus which carries more with it. Poor, indeed, have been the attempts to overthrow it. They have usually been the outcome of some intense anti-supernatural theory, or else have been inspired by a sneer. Nowhere else in all the records of earthly deeds and happenings can you find such a parallel of constant, inflexible, searching condemnation of sin, with at the same time an exhibition of merciful, self-sacrificing, forgiving love as in these brief, straightforward narratives. When Christ says, therefore, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," that is what the revelation of God is to us. There was but one name which Jesus could use to cover it all, and that was "Father," and by a direct statement and by parable, as well as by His every deed He has tried to

make clear to us that the divine reality behind this visible universe is (to borrow the words of Bishop Morehouse), "the will to love"—(to love widely, unchangeably). The Fatherhood of God as thus conceived is the "master thought" of Christ's teaching. It can run no risks of being pushed into the service of sentimental weakness toward sin, as long as we keep our eyes upon the holy life of the Master; nor can the name of God be used in connection with hard and loveless dogmas as long as we keep the unfailing sympathy, and self-sacrificing love of that same life before us. I have not time to tell you how the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God has been magnified in modern thinking; I can only say that it has all come by the way of the study of Christ—and in view of it that agnosticism (a Greek word meaning know-nothingism), which with its refusal to look into the New Testament declares that God cannot be known, is indeed pathetic. It certainly is the belief of every earnest Christian, that no man can justify himself in such ignorance unless he has earnestly put to the test the words of the Master, that He is the way to the Father.

Again, to the Church the "spiritual import" of Christ is that:

II. He is the way and means to us of God's forgiveness. When men argue from their ability to forgive to God's ability to do the same, it seems like a simple argument from the less to the greater. In fact it is so easily done that it leads to very lax conceptions of God's estimate of wrongdoing. If I have sinned against God and I repent of my sin, what else is there for Him to do, but to forgive me? That looks like a simple, straightforward question. Is not that all that appears in the parable of the Prodigal Son? He comes to himself amid the degrading surroundings of the far country and says, "I will go home and say to my father—'Father I have sinned against heaven'." The story then tells us of the father's welcome and the merrymaking over him who had been lost but now was found. Is not that the Gospel in miniature? If by gospel in that question is meant the whole Gospel, the answer is quickly given—"No, it is not the whole Gospel, but only so much as Jesus meant to illustrate by that parable." Between any man's confession of sin, and God's forgiveness stands all that is signified in the Gospel story by the cross. Do you think that that is little? Long ago, Plato said, "I think that God can forgive sin, but I do not see how,"

and that was because he had seen "that evil and its due reward are, in a moral world, riveted together." It was Dr. Chalmers who used to say that "forgiveness is a problem fit for a God." If sin had been of such small account that acknowledgment of its wrong were enough to secure its forgiveness, then the whole attitude of Jesus toward it in the New Testament is an exaggeration. On the contrary, because of it, He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The burden of it rested ceaselessly upon His heart, and the anguish of the cross had in this the explanation of its awful intensity. All through the New Testament that suffering is connected with our forgiveness, or rather our forgiveness is inseparably connected with it. Why must Christ suffer and die that we might be forgiven? That is the central question of the doctrine of the Atonement. It has been variously answered, but no answer fails to recognize the fact that man lives in an ethical universe in which the connection between evil and its due judgment cannot be set aside without involving in the end moral anarchy. And so, as one has well said, God's problem "is to save men who by the ethical order of a moral universe are condemned, and at the same time save the ethical order that con-

demns them," or to put it in Paul's words, to "be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans iii, 26). Nor does the death of the cross give us all that we need to bring to us this forgiveness. That release from the guilt of sin which is spoken of when Paul declares that there is "now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," comes only to those who are in life one with Christ. Concisely and truthfully has it been said that "No one is ready for forgiveness who has not repented, no one has received forgiveness who is not being sanctified." The forgiveness of the Gospel is, thus you see, no easy, superficial blessing such as may be an ordinary human forgiveness. It caused God to send His Son to dwell among us, to identify Himself with us, to die for us and then to dwell within us. Surely, it must be difficult to understand all this, if one has no sense of the sinfulness of sin. Tetzel stood in the market places of Germany and sold the forgiveness of sin for money, and all the while the religious society of which he formed a part, sank deeper and deeper into sin. I have heard men turn from the confession of their sins, through the mouth of the priest, to curse the very name which a few moments before they were professing to worship. The for-

giveness of God in Christ allows no such possibility in the life that has received it. No man who knows what divine forgiveness has cost can bargain with sin. The cross has become the symbol of the Church of love and sacrifice, but it is also the symbol of the divine hatred of sin. It is not strange in the light of all this that the Christian sings: "In the Cross of Christ I glory." By and through Him whom it always brings to mind, we have come to freedom from the burden of sin, to peace with God. The doctrine of the Atonement is the very heart of the New Testament.

Once more, the spiritual import of Christ is that:

III. He is the motive power of the Christian life. I must ask you now to listen to that which at first may have a mystical sound, but which after all, touches one of the great vital beliefs we have regarding Christ. More than one Christian, as he has read the Gospels has wished that he might once have come into the presence of Jesus and heard Him speak. No small part of the pleasure in visiting the Holy Land to-day, is in making vivid and real by experience the scenery through which He walked. So hungry are the senses for help toward the realization of His per-

sonality. You will recall that at the time when the apostles were cast down and trembled because they were to see Him but for a little while, He made those promises about "not leaving them comfortless" and about being always with them, "even unto the end of the world." Such words from an earthly friend would mean to us that in the memories we have of him he would live on with us, but Jesus meant far more than this. And when you turn to the Epistles there is in them no "in memoriam" strain. They are full of the confidence that with them is the Spirit of Christ. So much is this so, that an earnest student of these Epistles declares that the great feature of this literature is this: that its writers "are so sure that the Spirit of Jesus is moving them, moulding them and transforming them, really, directly, powerfully, personally, as when He walked on earth, and spoke to them." The doctrine of the indwelling Christ is one of Paul's great teachings. He writes to the Galatians, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20). His glad confidence of power and ultimate triumph is due to this spiritual power within him. Whenever in the history of the Church there has been an awakening, this faith as taken new vitality in

the consciousness of serious and devout Christians. Luther used to say, "Should anyone knock at my breast and say 'Who lives here?' I should reply, 'Not Martin Luther, but the Lord Jesus.'" (Table Talk.) In his "Letters to His Sister," General Gordon dwells again and again upon the power and peace that come from the faith that the living Christ is present within us. Take those three names together, Paul, Luther, Gordon, and reflect for a moment upon their strenuous activities, their large achievement, and their active, wide-reaching influence, and then see whether the objection that the doctrine is too mystical is worthy of consideration. Indeed, have we not rather a great distinctive teaching of Christianity, which makes the Christian life an intensely vital matter? When Jesus replied to the perplexed Thomas, He said to him, I am the Way, by being the truth, and by being the life. How more completely could the whole Way be covered? If truth gave the ideals and principles, life should give the power. It makes our salvation all of Christ, i. e., the provisions for it, the ideals connected with it, and the power to realize it, are all of Him. The one thing we have to do is by an obedient will and a devoted heart to keep ourselves open

to the influences which He brings to bear upon us—in line with the power which He is ready to exert within us. We are not by wearisome doings of any kind whatsoever to try and lift ourselves to Heaven. We are simply to give place to the heavenly force that is within us. In this way the Church itself becomes an incarnation of Christ. As He incarnated God, so we incarnate Him. In one of those addresses which brought to so many spiritual illumination, Henry Drummond began by quoting Huxley, who said, "I protest, that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, and wound up every morning, I should instantly close with the offer." "That offer I propose to make now," said the speaker. "In all seriousness without being 'turned into a sort of clock' the end can be attained," and then he set forth in his own way this reality of Christ, the motive power. A noble portion it is in the good tidings of the Gospel. Once more, the "spiritual import" of Christ is that:

IV. He is the Surety of our final and complete redemption. In all that I have thus far said, He is to us the means and power of spiritual development—here, amid these sur-

roundings of earth and sense. What of it all when the last supreme hour of life comes to each of us? If glory is to be given to the name of Christ for the work He can do for us in giving us peace with God, and the construction of a worthy character, what shall we say when we come to see what both facts and teaching bring to us in regard to His meaning for us, when we stand face to face with death? That grim specter that fills the world with sorrow and dread; has not he been met and robbed of his terrors? In no words has Jesus been more explicit and assuring, than in those in which He tells us that death cannot defeat His purposes, or dash our hopes. "He that believeth in me shall never die." One may go through the shadowy portals we call death, yes, but into the glorious fullness of life eternal. That were a great thing to believe if it had been simply said by one so worthy of credence as the Teacher of Galilee but when He Himself passed through death and on that first Easter morning became "the firstfruits of them that sleep," what greater surety can we ask? Is Paul saying too much when he declares that as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly? Nay! if you have ever studied that 15th chap-

ter of 1st Corinthians, the glad yet solemn message of our burial service, you have seen how the great Apostle—with his eyes upon the Christ of history and the Christ of experience alike—has written out the innermost meaning of faith as it concerns the vital union of Christ with those who are His. Nothing can touch it, much less break it. Nor is there in it merely the promise of immortality of soul. We shall be clothed with that body which is from heaven, and which is suited to heaven's glory and service. In our day-dreams of what it all shall be, the imagination falls back baffled and impotent. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. This only do we know, "that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."

Let me now ask you to look back for a moment over the way we have come. As to the Christ of history we believe that in the Gospels we have a true record of what He said and did, and when we come to study the spiritual import of those facts as it has been set forth in what His life revealed, the Apostles taught, and the experience of an innumerable company of believers has confirmed, we find that He is to us the living revelation of a holy and loving God, the means whereby we gain

God's forgiveness, the motive power of a spiritual life, and the surety of our everlasting life in the glory of the resurrection state. If all that be true (and if it be not, then the New Testament is not true), what of such a question as—Was Jesus merely a man? There seems to me to be little room for it. All through His earthly life the divine shines through the sinlessness of His nature, and the work He has been doing ever since He ascended on high is Godlike and only Godlike. It is unquestionably true that the Scriptures are not to teach us metaphysics, and a man's metaphysical conceptions have little to do with his salvation. Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and by belief I mean committing himself unreservedly to His Spirit and service, shall be saved even though all his intellectual conceptions do not rise to the requirements of a given creed, but the great Church of all ages has been true to the spiritual teachings of the New Testament and to the realities of its best experience in calling Jesus Lord, and giving Him the exalted place of Deity.

I have in all this said nothing of the teachings of the second coming. It is a subject sufficient for an hour by itself. It is enough to say that the hope of the world is in this.

There is a form of it which is pessimistic, and it seems to me to dishonor Christ. Is it a perverted vision which sees Him in the distant years as the Lord of China, and of India, and of dark, degraded Africa? Are the 200,000,000 of the Mohammedan world to have no other light than that which comes from the pages of the Koran, and the dreary formalism of the mosque? Are we ourselves to work out no sane, social Christianity that shall make more vital the brotherhood of man? Coming? Is that the question? Yes. —In every heart that through Him finds its way into the Kingdom of God, in all the social unrest that is reaching out for His solution of its pressing problems, in every missionary enterprise that wins for Him disciples from the darkness of superstition and a mistaken faith, and at last, when all is done that can be done,—when every enemy has been put under His feet—in the last final scene of earth's redemptive history.

CONCERNING THE BIBLE

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BY GEORGE BLACK STEWART

1. What we believe concerning the Bible is largely affected by two influences: by our training and by our own experience. The Bible is not a new book to us. From our infancy we have been familiar with its pages. We have listened to its stories at our mother's knee; we have committed to memory its verses to gain some coveted prize or to atone for some departure from rectitude; we have been instructed from its pages by parents, teachers, pastors; have been exhorted, warned, admonished by those who sought our welfare and who wisely or unwisely enforced their own words with words from Holy Writ. We have seen doctrines buttressed and doctrines overthrown by texts cleverly chosen and skillfully used. Thus in many ways we have been made daily acquainted with the teaching and use of the Bible.

It is difficult for us to imagine the first impression the Bible would make upon one who reads it for the first time and to whom it

comes as an entirely new book. In a way we may have this experience for ourselves if in our reading of it we endeavor to divest our minds of all former notions about the book and its teachings and yield ourselves to it that it may make its own fresh impression and unaided tell its own story. In point of fact, however, the most of us retain far on into life and perhaps to its close that feeling toward the Bible which we received through our early training.

There is another influence which, especially in these days, is doing much to determine men's attitude toward the Bible, and that is what I have called experience. By this term, I mean that bundle of influences which determine our intellectual and religious atmosphere to-day, some of them distinctly secular and apart from the Bible, and some of them quite religious and growing out of our own personal study of the Bible.

These two influences may work together or they may oppose each other, but they are both at work upon all of us who care to give any attention to this book. For example, if I have been taught that, since the Bible, an inspired book, says the world was made in six days of twenty-four hours each, it was therefore made within those time-limits; and, if

my knowledge of modern science convinces me that it was not thus made, these two influences do not tend to affect me in the same way toward the Bible. Or, if I have been taught that the Bible says God always answers prayer, and if in my experience I find that he does not, I am affected differently by training and by experience.

Now as men usually, and properly too, hold more tenaciously to what they have learned for themselves than to what they have been told by others, this conflict between teaching and experience makes against the teaching about the Bible, and all too frequently against the Bible itself. If we simply reject what we have been taught about the Bible, we will doubtless form new views about it which will harmonize with our experience and still preserve for us our reverence and faith in its religious teaching. This is what many of us have done and are doing, to our own peace of mind and spiritual profit. If we so confuse our early training about the Bible with the book itself, as to reject the book along with the teaching about it, then we are quite adrift, neither accepting its doctrine nor seeking its guidance. It is just in this region of conflict between what we have been taught about the Book and what we are learning for our-

selves in the school of life, that most of the interest concerning the discussion about the Bible lies. It is this conflict that starts most of the questions that men are asking to-day about the Bible. It is my firm conviction that these questions can be answered so as to allow us to retain, on the one hand, our reverence for the Scripture and our faith in its doctrine, and on the other hand, our intellectual integrity in the presence of the facts and truths of life and the world. I am fully persuaded that we can harmonize a doctrine about the Bible and the accepted facts of life without sacrificing either its high character or our intellectual honesty and moral sincerity.

2. My belief in the Bible is secondary to my belief in God.

God is the starting point in all religious thinking and life, as he is the beginning and end of all things. The primary question for a man is not whether he believes the Bible but whether he believes God. To get right with him, not to get right with the Bible is the first duty of man. There must be no confusion in our thought here. Yet there is any amount of confusion just at this point. Some identify man's relation to God and the Bible so completely as to say that one cannot be a

Christian unless he accepts the Bible as an inspired book, or, that in becoming a Christian one must begin by believing what the Bible has to say upon Christian belief and practice.

This is not to put the first thing first. This first obligation of every man is met not by accepting a Book but by faith and repentance. Every man is to be told that he is to forsake his sin and turn unto God, not that he is to believe the Bible. Important as is the Bible and significant as is its place in the Christian thought and life, yet it is not first. We are to allow no man to think that it is. Get right with God, and then you are in a position of advantage to adjust yourself properly to the Bible. The fact that you do or do not believe the Bible in no way releases you from this primary duty. Our belief in the Bible does not put it in God's place.

3. Our belief in the Bible recognizes its variety and its unity.

When we open the Bible we note that it is not one book, but sixty-six books. It is a library of books of history, biography, lyric poetry, epic poetry, drama, gnomic sayings, philosophical essays, letters, apocalypses. It is the best literature of an ancient people, representing their literary activity during

eleven, perhaps sixteen centuries. This variety in literary form and these centuries so full of changes in national life, ideas and hopes, are marked by corresponding variety in the contents of these books. Each writer reflects his age and has his message for his age. He speaks the language of his day and speaks it so that the men about him may understand him and profit by what he says. Yet with all this variety there exists a most interesting and truly marvelous unity, a unity of thought, of moral and religious ideas and ideals, of point of view, of spirit and of purpose. It is not the unity of uniformity, but of harmony and of progress. It must be admitted that there is a different moral tone in the directions given by Samuel to Saul to kill the Amalekites, both old and young and to destroy all their possessions because they had been inhospitable to Israel, and the rebuke of our Lord to his disciples when they desired to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village because they refused to receive him. There is a distinctly different tone in the Sermon on the Mount and the Law spoken on Mount Sinai. Our Lord recognized the difference in his teaching and that of Moses respecting divorce.

Yet this difference is the difference between

the seed and the full corn in the ear. There is a progress in doctrine in the Scripture and this progress marks the deeper unity. The notes struck are different but not discordant. The great ideas—God, righteousness, sin, the close relations of religion and morality, the presence of a kingdom of God—these great, dominant ideas are always the same. They are not always put with the same force, or clearness, but always with the same high sense of reality. The God of Genesis is the God of Revelation; the God of Isaiah, and of Hosea, and Paul and of Jesus is one and the same. He is more clearly apprehended by one than by the others, he shows a different side of his character to these different men, and yet as we listen to what these books and men, so widely separated in time and circumstance, have to say about God, we are impressed by the fact that they are talking about the same high and holy God. Sin is the same evil thing in the early and late books. Salvation to the writers of the Old and the New Testaments is a deliverance from sin wrought by God for man. This deep, fundamental unity touching the essential realities in religion and ethics is one of the most impressive facts regarding the Scriptures.

The Church has expressed this sense of the

unity of the Bible by binding these books together and calling them, THE BOOK. The world has recognized this unity by not seriously seeking to disturb the union of the books or seriously assailing the oneness in religious and moral character thus fittingly expressed.

This surprising fact of unity in so great variety must be explained and it is adequately explained by attributing it to the activity of the Spirit of God. He presided over this mighty movement of thought in the Jewish nation and he inspired these men who from time to time gave it expression. These great and true ideas under his guidance wrought themselves into the life and thought of Israel, and by the same power they are being wrought into the varied thought and life of to-day. When these men of old spake of God, and of his relation to man and of man's relation to him, they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We believe these many books are THE BOOK, essentially one book.

4. We believe the Bible is essentially a religious book.

It contains history, but its value to us is not historical. It contains poetry, but its value for us is not æsthetical or literary. It throws much light upon the philosophical, the

scientific, the social knowledge of the centuries in which its various parts were written, but it is not in these that our interest in the Bible lies. We do not conceive that the activity of the divine Spirit was concerned with any of these subordinate uses of the Bible. The unity which he has secured in the midst of the great variety of culture, of intellectual and spiritual environment, of temperament, of character in the case of the many writers, is a spiritual unity and has had as its end a spiritual result. It is a religious book.

It records a great religious movement, it deals with great religious ideas, it aims at great religious effects. We therefore come wide of the mark, if our interest in the Bible exhausts itself in such secondary questions as, whether the early chapters in Genesis are history or story, or the book of Jonah is a history or a parable, or the stories in Daniel are narratives of actual incidents or sermon-stories narrated for the moral effect, or the Song of Songs an allegory or a dramatic poem. These matters have their value and they are not to be despised. But they do not furnish the chief question, nor do they affect the chief question.

The main question for us is, Does the Bible

deal with spiritual realities and deal with them in a trustworthy way? This is what it professes to do, and this is what it does. It seizes upon man's fundamental problem, How to be reconciled to God? and solves it. "Salvation is of the Jews." God is the Saviour of men, whether the salvation is conceived as material prosperity, or political deliverance, or rescue from the wrath of man, or pardon of sin, or emancipation from its power. Man is the one who makes the break with God, and man keeps up the separation. God is ever seeking to effect a reconciliation with man; he exhausts the resources of the divine power to persuade men to trust him, to love him, to enthrone him. It is a long, tedious, disheartening struggle between God's love and grace and patience and man's wilfulness and selfishness and lust. God never gives over the struggle, but by Voice and Vision, in special providence and the great on-going of events, through priest and prophet, to individuals and nation, he reveals himself as men are able to bear it. Step by step through disappointing reactions man moves to higher ground, to brighter light. God in his search for man, and man in his seeking after God find each other more and more perfectly.

It is a great spiritual history, wrought out in the life of man and of the world, and the Bible gives us the record of it with such sweep of vision, with such minuteness of detail, with such accuracy of description, as to make its story utterly trustworthy.

The center and charm and worth of it all is Jesus Christ. He is the consummate revelation of God. He is the ideal man. In him God, the Saviour, and man, the saved, unite. To know him is to know God. To become like him is to become a perfect man. He completes the story of the old dispensation and gives it its significance. He begins the story of the new dispensation and gives it its power. He is the light which lighteth every man. He shines in all the past, the present, the future for men to guide them in the path of life. He is anointed of God and received of men as the one Mediator between God and man. He is the prophet, priest and king, of whom all others are but symbols. He is the reality. Without this reality they lose their value. Without Jesus Christ, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, revealed in his life-history and continuing power in the New, the Bible would lose its charm and its value. For after all is said, it is because of Jesus that the Bible is the Book of Books.

He is its authentication. He creates and perpetuates its influence. It stands or falls with him and not he with it.

It is because it brings him to view of our mind and heart, because it makes God in Christ real to us, because it opens to us visions of the unseen realities of the world and of life, that the Bible is for us more than a record of revelations, is in fact itself a revelation. In it we find the things of character, in it we come close to God and he comes close to us, in it we find the pathway of peace, of glorious and triumphant redemption, in it we find God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

It is the high-water mark of man's ethical and religious thinking. Nowhere else do we find such exalted spiritual conceptions. No other set of men ever attained to these heights. No other men have ever gone beyond them. Men are not writing to-day the way the men wrote in the Bible. "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus Christ will never be surpassed." He stands at the summit of human life. And he carries with him to that exalted height the Holy Bible. It enjoys with him the unapproachable eminence. So long as he abides the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether

lovely, the Saviour and Lord of men, so long will the Bible maintain its preëminence in the religious life of the world. In him the word of God is yea, and amen forever. The incarnate Word validates and guarantees the written word. So long as we have no fear for his preëminence we need have none for its preëminence.

5. We believe the Bible is a great creative force.

It goes without saying that the Bible in its Old Testament had a prodigious influence among the Jews and in the Old and New Testaments has even a vaster influence among Christians. It has never been a dead book. It has created a civilization. It is the living force at the center of a regenerated humanity. It has given birth to the noblest literature in the history of every people to whom it has come. It has unique power for quickening dead souls, for purifying corrupt lives, for converting beaten men into conquerors, and stricken spirits into those that are filled with hope and joy, for finding in the darkest spots of the heart a home for the brightest light of heaven. It goes throughout the earth as a great and living power, subduing the passions of men, banishing their hate, beating the swords into plowshares,

emancipating the slaves of man's power, his greed, his lust, supplanting other ethical and religious books and teachers and systems, causing the desert to blossom as the rose and the mountain top to be fertile as the valley.

It is not for us to say that this tremendous creative power of the Bible in the heart and in society is due to it as a book or as a literature. It is not maintained that these marvelous results follow where it is received and read as history, or philosophy, or poetry, or even as the mere record of a great people's great religious life. Indeed, there is much reason for us to think that the Bible received as history or biography or poetry or proverb, even though it be buttressed in the most rigid theory of inspiration has no creative or re-creative power beyond other literature. This unique power is due to its unique character as a veritable revelation of God to man. Jesus Christ makes this book omnipotent. God here speaks the word of life. The man, the men, who cry out to Jesus, "Lord, open thou my eyes that I may see wondrous things in thy law"; who stretch out their hands to God, blindly groping in the dark, if haply they may find him, these and men like them are the ones to whom the Bible comes as a great light, whose feet it guides in the

way of life. As is said of the Master, so it may be said of it, "Where meek souls receive it, it enters in." Here, in the sphere of the spirit, the sphere where character is formed, where God and man meet, where the unseen realities exist and are revealed and are potent, is the sphere of the Bible's tremendous power.

6. It is the Book of our religion.

Christianity is not the religion of a book, but a religion with a book. The religion has created the book, and the book widens and enhances the force of the religion. It has been a most valuable instrument in the hands of the disciples of Jesus for extending his kingdom and for bringing men into the knowledge and fellowship of him. It is one of the greatest gifts of our Faith to the world, and in turn it is one of the greatest means for the propagation of the faith. It is born out of man's profoundest religious experiences, when the Spirit of God speaks most plainly to him. It ministers to man's profoundest religious experiences, and finds him in the deepest recesses of his life where God alone deals with him.

It is this finding power of the Bible that is its highest authentication to our hearts. When we open its pages, somehow its mes-

sage of conviction for sin, of offer of salvation, of comfort in sorrow, of fellowship with God, of part in the heavenly glory and blessedness, goes to our heart as no other message has the power to do. "It finds me in the chamber where I sit alone. It finds me out in my sin when I fain would be let alone; it reproaches me till I go out to hide my tears, though I do not want to leave the mirth and song of my sinful pleasure; it makes a coward of me, and I shake in my shoes, though I am for setting my face as a flint in the path of sin, and hardening my joints as iron. It searches me thoroughly and reveals me to myself." It is a candle of the Lord, seeking out the dark places of my soul. It is a rod of God, correcting me in my folly. It is a staff of the Lord strengthening me in my weakness. It is a balm of the Lord, healing my sickness and my hurt. With unerring skill it finds me, reproves, rebukes, exhorts, guides, and cheers me. It doth abundantly evidence itself to my heart to be the Word of God to me.

Whether all parts are equally inspired, and whether all parts have the same authority, are questions for debate among those who fancy such academic questions. They have small practical value, even to those who hold

the stiffest theory of verbal inspiration. Practically only those parts of the Bible are a living Word of God to us, which find us in our inner life. Those are the parts which we love to read, those are the parts which terrify, comfort, strengthen, help us. Those are the parts that our copy of the Scriptures opens to, if they are familiar, or that flash out with new light and power, if they are discovered by us. Those are the inspired Word of God, which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that we may be men of God, perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Much more might be said about our Christian belief concerning the Bible, and it is of such high value, that it may fairly be questioned whether it rather than what has been just said ought not to have been uttered. But I am not prepared to admit that a truer purpose to enthrone the Bible might have inspired the utterance. My belief in the Bible leads me with all urgency to call men to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. It leads me to say to all men, the first thing for you to do is to get right with God, to get as close to him as you can, to follow the best light you have, to surrender

yourself to him, to trust him to give you more and still more light. Your only hope of salvation and peace and heaven is in God. Turn to God. My belief in the Bible impels me to urge all men to read and study its pages, to open their hearts to its sweet influences, to entrust themselves to its guidance in their journey along the perilous road of life, to test their doctrine by its doctrine and to test their lives by its counsel.

My belief in the Bible fills me with utter calm and security in the midst of all the strife of tongues and the assault of men upon it or upon the religion out of which it has been born. It is an anvil which has worn out many hammers and will wear out many more. Let men scrutinize its pages, test its statements, discredit our knowledge about its origin, its contents, its authority, yet I have no sleepless hours or disturbed dreams about its value, its truth or its power. It is a living book, it reveals a living Saviour and Lord, it ministers to needy souls a living Gospel.

CONCERNING MAN

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BY ALLEN MACY DULLES

Upon this planet, and only upon this planet, so far as we know, there walks a creature who calls himself man. He alone can name himself. Other animals must come to him for their names, for he alone has the power of abstract thought. He alone can communicate thought through words.

Whence this man is, and whither he shall go, and what he is, are questions which have occupied and even distressed man from the beginning of self-consciousness.

"Who'll tell me my secret,
The ages have kept;
The fate of the man child,
The meaning of man.

"Out of sleeping a waking,
Out of waking a sleep;
Life, death overtaking,
Deep underneath deep."

King Edwin, of the Saxons, gathered the wise men of Northumbria to have their opin-

ion of the Christian religion. "So seems the life of man," burst forth the aged ealderman, "As a sparrow's flight through the hall when one is sitting at meat in wintertide, the warm fire on the hearth, the icy rain storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the darkness whence it came.

"So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight. If this new teaching tell us aught, let us follow it."

Concerning the origin of man, as an object of science, and his physical ancestry, we have no need to inquire. If science can inform us as to how God created man, we certainly shall gratefully accept such information. We have no fear of the doctrine of evolution.

Since we see man evolved from the infant year by year before our eyes, from the insignificant, ignorant, unintelligent creature, to the man of fully developed powers, we need have no religious apprehension if the development of the race has had a corresponding history. We know not how man is made. Science has not spoken its last word. The doctrine of Darwin has been greatly modi-

fied, and is likely to be still further modified; and the crude notion of evolution, as a mere unfolding in endless process, may be supplanted by some new hypothesis.

So far, however, as science speaks with unanimity, its account of man's origin is favorable to man's loftiest thought of himself. All that science can say concerning man's origin does not tend to lessen him in our estimation. For science itself, in its best advocates, assures us that this creature, man, is the end toward which the whole creation has been groaning and travailing in pain.

Man stands at the end of the whole cosmic process; and evolution has reached, as Fiske tells us, its practical end in the formation of man. Henceforth, all the differentiation will take place within man in his spirit, and not in his physical form.

The fancy of some philosophers that man has had an antecedent existence is unprovable. That

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar,"

is a poet's dream, not fact. It is more important for us to place this man in the realm

of animate things. To what class does he belong? Shall he be placed within or beyond the animal?

On his physical side, science places man among the animals. His bodily structure is similar to that of the vertebrate animals. He is one of the Mammals and as such, close of kin to all the mammalian order of Primates.

We may not even affirm that he is the most highly specialized of his group.

Other creatures far exceed man in their physical strength, in swiftness of motion, in keenness of vision, in the development of their senses, in the perfection of their instincts and their ability to realize the apparent ends of their existence.

The lily of the field, our Saviour says, exceeds the glory of Solomon. The fish, which, invested with scales of gold and silver, flashes through the water, has an outward beauty man cannot show. The skylark which goes with music in its warbling throat up to heaven's gates, at eventide, excites the poet's envy.

And yet, even physically regarded, man has his own nobility; and when seen in the fullness of his strength and beauty he is not mean, among the noblest of God's creatures.

And, in one respect at least, man physically exceeds all other creatures.

The human hand, as Aristotle long ago noted, is a marvelous possession, which distinguishes man from all other creatures and exalts him above them. By means of it he can gain an ascendency over every other living thing. With it, he can strike his prey afar off. With it, he can fashion and form, construct and build.

But, man's place in nature cannot be ascertained by the study of his body. The most distinctive part of man is his reason which may be spiritualized. Nor is the reason but a physical manifestation.

The bold statement that the brain secretes thought, as the liver does bile, which simply expresses the materialistic idea that man's thought is nothing but the movement of brain tissue, is not an idea which science really encourages. For, as Fiske says,—"It is not even correct to say that thought goes on in the brain. What goes on in the brain is an amazingly complex series of unknown molecular movements with which thought and feeling are in some way connected not as cause and effect, but concomitant."

In her better, nobler moods, science cannot quite be content to leave man among the ani-

mals that perish. She may place him within this realm, and yet conducts him to the outermost rim thereof. She takes him by the hand, and leads him to the threshold that he may gaze out, if sometimes despairingly, over the immeasurable inheritance which stretches out before him. Science may yet tell me more concerning this physical form than we now know. But there is no likelihood that science will ever succeed, nor does it want to succeed, in saying that man is nothing but matter, perishable dust.

If science places man seemingly within the lower animal world, philosophy certainly exalts him. He has a superior perfectibility. He has superior means of expressing his inner life through speech. He has superiority of a social nature, organizing capacity. He has a religious element which, as is now universally recognized, is nowhere wanting. It is man alone, as philosophy assures us, who comes to true self-consciousness.

Philosophy places man in a lofty place, apart. To the philosopher, man is the creature of mind. He has reason. It is by his intelligence, his power of thought, that he excels all other creatures.

It is true that other animals which he puts beneath him can also in some degree think,

yet the comparison between the thoughts of animals and this man, renders the former insignificant, even when compared with the lowest of the human race.

I do not refer to that instinct which is so amazing, so indescribably wonderful, in some animals, but the connecting of ideas and the thinking in abstract terms, of which all men are capable, removes man from the lower animals.

The limits of animal thinking are soon reached; but there is no limit to the thought of man. In his thought he scales the sky, and ascends into the heavens by the way of the stars.

Following the thoughts of the great Creator, he measures the heavens, and weighs the stars in the balance.

Under his control are the forces of nature. They obey his will. They become his servants; by means of which he not only has himself transported with rapidity from place to place, but sends his words traveling to the very ends of the earth in a few moments of time.

It is man who refashions the material of earth into forms which his own genius suggests. The marble becomes a thing of beauty; the canvas catches the evanescent

colors of the sky; and the fading beauty of the human face is made a thing of perpetual admiration. Out of the quarries of the mountains he gathers the materials with which to construct the buildings which almost defy time in their permanence, and which are indicative of the creative talent with which his Maker has endowed him. So that

> "Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
> As the best gem upon her zone;
> And Morning opes with haste her lids
> To gaze upon the Pyramids."

Man has reason, so that he demands that the universe itself shall accord with his reason. He has such a reason that what contradicts his intelligence, of necessity cannot be. He boldly affirms that the universe must be rational. He can understand it and its laws. He becomes partner with the Creator thereof in its comprehension.

This creature of the dust, as science tells us, lifts his thoughts to eternity. The infinite is present in his consciousness, and the eternal has place in his speech. His reason does not generate the world, but it holds the world in his mind with intelligent comprehension.

He arranges the mixed and multiform im-

pressions into a system of thought which he boldly affirms represents the real world.

While the range of reason in man differs, from that of the schoolboy to a Pascal, yet the difference in the race as a whole does not affect our high opinion of mankind, since it is not greater from the lowest human being to the highest, than in the history of any individual from infancy to maturity.

And if the infant child can be father to the man without break, we have no reason to say of any man that his reason is other in its nature than that of the wisest of men.

Philosophy affirms reason as essential to men, and human reason reaches out after the Eternal Reason.

It pertains to the nature of man that he should seek after God. Although the notion of Max Müller and others that man suffers from the invisible is sometimes sneered at, and met with the assertion that this is an altogether modern malady, and that primitive man, or natural man, suffers from the visible only, yet it is an undeniable fact.

Strangely enough, those who deny this vague feeling to man are pleased oftentimes to affirm it in the lower creatures. The dog as he bays at the moon, mysteriously affected by he knows not what, would certainly sug-

gest the possibility that man not only may but must, in his earliest condition, experience that of which a French philosopher speaks when he says,—"Despite myself, the infinite torments me."

It is impossible that man shall not suspect God in what lies beyond sense and sight, the limits of which he realizes. The very thought that man is aware of limitation, has in it already the suggestion of the unlimited..

It cannot be untrue, what Homer said long ago, that "All men long for the gods." It is no modern want which the psalmist expresses,—"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee."

It is true, what Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee."

The history of religion, and man has never been other than religious, tells us that man has always reached out to touch, if possible, the hand of God.

The discontent which is a part of man's natural condition, which unless relieved issues in profound despair; man's universal belief in his own immortality; the endless reach of his thought capacity which is never satisfied; the search for the perfect; and the

realization of ideals,—would all tell us that the natural man has indeed this longing for God. In one of Plato's dialogues Socrates says,—"The idea was in his mind. All I had to do was to pull it out."

In some real sense God's spirit is a part of man's life. And it is because man feels God, as Goethe tells us, "in himself," that it is possible to prove His existence.

The natural man, indeed, may not know God, cannot know God without being acted upon by God Himself, any more than he can know nature without its operating upon his senses.

As Hegel has said,—"The substance of religion cannot be brought into a man as anything new. This would be as preposterous as it would be to try to introduce a spirit into a dog by letting him gnaw the printed scriptures."

But the philosopher affirms this human potentiality of the knowledge of God and likeness to Him. Man's spiritual susceptibilities may be stunted and undeveloped, but yet it remains true that "every human heart is human. And even in savage bosoms there are yearnings, strivings, longings, for the good they comprehend not."

We may liken man, as Tennyson does, to

the æolian harp, from which music comes when smitten by the wind.

As Endymion needed to be awaked by the touch of Selene, so man sleeps till touched by the hand, the revelation of God. As the mind sleeps and needs to be aroused, so this higher strain of human nature may need awakening. But, as Goethe says, "Were not the eye illuminated, never could it see the sun. Dwelt not in us God's own strength, never could the divine delight us."

For man does not gaze with mere animal wonder into the heavens, and over the beauty of the earth.

In the depths of his spirit there is a feeling which Pascal describes when he says,—"The depths of space fill me with terror."

There comes before this man the thought of a being—an eternal and infinite being. For even the man whom we call natural, is never without some thought of God. It is only the sophisticated man who is the atheist.

Philosophy, especially the philosopher who has the vision of the poet and the prophet, discovers in man more than is known to the senses.

He sees in man the child of a transcendental world, and finds no difficulty in the assurance that he is made in the image of

God, after His likeness; that man is the child of God.

Nor will the philosopher be driven away from the belief that man's reason is of divine origin, by the frightful contrasts which life presents.

It is true that the human family contains its weaklings, as well as its heroes strong in mind and body.

Intellectually, man may be a Newton, a Socrates, or a pitiable idiot, incapable of controlling his thoughts. He may rise morally to the height of a John Howard, or descend to the depths of drunken licentiousness.

Over against a John, may be set a Judas. Spiritually, he may rise to the heights of St. Paul or St. Francis, or descend to the depths of the fool, who will not believe there is any God.

Some seem incapable of seeing any other than the degenerate man. One of the last sentences of Voltaire was,—"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals."

And Frederick the Great said in a cynical mood,—"I know the damned race too well."

Yet low as man may sink, he bears with him some marks, even if in ruins, of the

Maker whose glory he was made to manifest, as well as to enjoy. Goethe (Faust) says that man uses his reason only to become more beastly than the beasts. Yet still his very depth of degradation witnesses to the height whence he is fallen. This fall is due to the fact that reason has not continued to grow steadily toward the spiritual ideal. The reason as such has grown, but not in character nor quality.

It is a reason which has continued to be, or become, earthly, carnal, sensual, devilish.

Let us try to understand what we mean when we speak of man as he is by nature. That is natural which expresses outwardly what is within, rather than that which is brought within from without.

The child is natural, as compared with the artificialness of the man of the world. The wood is natural when it has not been changed by the hand of man. The scene is natural which abides as it was before man exercised upon it any of his own thought and imagination.

When a thing is what it is by growth from within, rather than by any kind of making from without, we call it natural. And yet, the effort to draw any distinction between the natural man and any other man, is not easy.

Do we mean thereby, the uneducated, the uncivilized, the uncultured man? In this sense it would be impossible to find any natural man, that is, any man altogether unaffected by educating influences, because the man who may be imagined to exist in the state of nature must exist in absolute solitariness, and cannot be regarded as being any more truly man for such solitary life and growth.

Indeed, man is not man until he lives in social relations; until there is some realization of moral duties. And it is impossible to find any man on the face of the earth altogether devoid of religious emotions, or even theological opinions.

To find such an imaginary creature we would have to go lower even than the lowest of barbarians.

The word has meaning as it distinguishes natural from spiritual.

The man by nature is contrasted with the man as he is by grace. Here, indeed, may be found a positive distinction, because there is implied the second birth. It is not with this denied that the natural man is also the child of God, who is appointed heir of all things. This natural man is chosen of God—chosen to inherit the Kingdom of God. This natural

man comes under the influence of God, so Tertullian speaks of the "naturally Christian," and Paul does not deny to him all knowledge of God.

Never this side of death is man anything else than the modified nature with which he enters life.

So that even as the uneducated man is not distinct from the cultured man by nature, neither is the spiritual man a different being from the natural man. These words have only relative significance. The flesh becomes life and soul, and the soul becomes spirit.

When you look at a watch, you may affirm that it keeps good time or bad time. It may have a silver or a gold encasing. It may be wound up to run for a day, or possibly for a year. But it never ceases to be the thing you call a watch.

The natural man was not created perfect. The perfection of the natural man is the spiritual man.

The first Adam was made in the image of God. But so is every newborn infant. And the statement concerning the original man means no more than that man started on a career which has likeness to God as its culmination.

Innocent man was, but not positively holy. The older Christian theology presented us with an original man who, in the state of integrity was free from sin, holy and upright.

But this cannot be regarded as meaning that man was perfect. The stately figure who in the "Paradise Lost" of Milton walks through the Garden in Eden is more the creature of his imagination than of fact.

Man was not created at the goal, but on the way to the goal. The making of man into the divine likeness is the product of God as a racial experience, and as the progressive work in each man.

Adam is a purely representative creature setting forth a fact of the first man. We are not asked to believe that the Almighty in human form took a mass of clay, and having fashioned it into human form, breathed into it his own breath.

But the Adam of Genesis is the first man, as Paul tells us, of the earth, earthy; far away from the second Adam,—Christ Jesus, of heaven, heavenly.

What Paul tells us concerning Adam can mean little, if anything, else than that Adam represents the natural man, as over against the spiritual man; represents man while still under the control of a physical nature before

the spiritual gains ascendency and complete triumph.

The Adamic nature, as Paul tells us, needs to be changed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ. It is this emergence from the natural to the spiritual world which makes sin both possible and actual. The natural man becomes and is the sinful man, when the natural man wills not in harmony with the spiritual world into which he is born. The natural man is to become spiritual. The natural is "by nature the child of wrath," as Paul says, when man continues to be "natural," when he should be "spiritual."

Man is a sinner because, and so far as, he wills not that which is God's will concerning him as made to be like Himself. Man sins because, and as, he refuses to emerge from the lower natural to the spiritual life. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." To be unspiritual, to be natural, is sin for man. As Paul tells us, without law there is no sin. Therefore, man becomes a sinner and is such by nature, because this new light, this new truth, this new spirit, finds him in volitional subjection to the lower system of desires which prevail in the animal world.

Man is naturally then, a sinner, because God's law and spirit find him dwelling in

the lower order of things. Every man's nature furnishes the material disobedience of God's will, but there is no sin until there is the conscious disobedience of God's commandment.

There is no sin in eating fruit, but there is sin in eating the forbidden fruit.

When the old *I* which has known no other law than itself, comes to know a higher law than self and is not willingly subject to it, then man becomes a sinner.

The sinner is not merely one who lives on the flesh plane, but one who does so against the call of God and His spirit. When man prefers to dwell in the kingdom of darkness, this is sin.

Is man by nature totally depraved? This is a question of purely academic interest, and involves a physical notion of sin.

Sin cannot be regarded quantitatively. Nevertheless, there was ground for the old statement, inasmuch as it must be said that the self is total in all its volitions. And it is the total nature that wills either the good or the bad. That is, the evil volition is a manifestation of the total nature.

Does man inherit a corrupt nature? We must answer again, yes, and no. Every man is born with a physical nature which has in

it the possibilities of transgression. So far, man inherits a corrupt nature.

Man's nature is corrupt, and he is an object of the divine wrath, so far as he wills to do those things which pertain to the nature which is below the region in which God's will is done.

Man's continuance as carnal is his sin. This, because man wills it. This is the *Fall,* when the natural man endowed with reason, conscious of God's will, remains on the lower level of the natural.

It matters not whether man be on a higher or lower range of the natural, the natural man is enmity against God, because God wills that the natural be spiritual, under dominion of the laws of the spirit world.

Man emerges, like Lazarus from his grave, with his graveclothes on him, to a new life. Man's spirit is born into this spirit world with the flesh volitions present with it, but there is with this birth the power to consent to the things of God and the power to will His will, that is the ends of the Spirit. The question concerning the freedom of man's will, whether in the state of nature or the state of grace, is a confused and confusing question.

It were well to remember that man has

no will, but *he wills*. Man is a *willing*, a self-directing person. He does not will *with* a will; he wills. The incipiency of self-direction is found at the beginning of animate life. At first, this is but instinct. It becomes self-conscious and rational in man. Man not only wills, he knows that he wills. And he knows what he wills.

Man knows that there were other ends which he has not willed. (I do not say which he might have willed, because this hypothetical volition never takes place.) We cannot enter into a discussion of the will, whether it be determined or undetermined. It is enough to say: man wills this or that end, whatever may be the relation of this willing to his desires and appetencies. Man wills and he knows he wills. Whether he wills freely or not is, perhaps, an unsolvable problem, depending much on the significance of the word free.

To will divine ends, these ends (commandments they become) must be seen by man, must be recognized as good. So far as man (the will) succeeds in bringing all the various volitional tendencies into subjection to this revealed end, God's purpose, so far is man free from sin, but so far as man wills the non-spiritual, merely

the natural, he is a sinner, with the possible end before him of final destruction.

What Paul calls the "sarx" is not to dominate man. The self of the spirit is not to obey the law of the flesh. This is to be a sinner, with the sure destiny awaiting one of the loss of the spirit, in the spiritual death of a flesh life. This death is not like that condition before I was spiritually born, in the innocency of the animal life, in the innocency of the child life, in the innocency of an Adam, but with the spirit still conscious of a lost glorious estate, enslaved to the baser power.

It is this calamity which Paul contemplates with such a mortal dread in his letter to the Romans. The danger is that the will, the self, of man may come under the dominion of this, "the flesh." Perfect liberty, Paul recognizes, is not immediately attainable. The reason why a person as Paul, can approve one end and yet do what is away from this end, is because the end which is consented to as good is not so strongly desired as the end which does not meet the approval of the moral nature,—this new order of things in my mental world. Which of these is the man's character? What he approves, or what he wills?

In this divided state there is as yet *no* fixed character. The person is in process of formation, with a theoretic possibility before it of saying,—as Milton's Satan: "Myself am hell." Or as Christ: "Myself am heaven."

The psychic forces of man's nature may still voluntarily go after the lower ends, with a growing consciousness of disapproval.

The infant passes on its habits to the child and the "Child is father of the man," though the days may not be "joined each to each in natural piety."

The fact that man can approve one thing and do another tells of the presence of a power which represents a higher order of things than that to which the natural man belongs. There speaks in this approval the voice of this higher order than the individual man. This is called conscience.

This conscience may represent the social or moral order of things. It may, in representative persons, who stand far above the many, be the voice of the transcendental world and God Himself. Thus the true prophets, thus supremely Jesus, witness of the man who is to be, the man of God.

The natural man comes within the domain

of this higher, spiritual influence which always must continue with it even though offended.

But this consent to the voice which speaks for the superior order of things is not, at the first, the equivalent to the volitional direction of the self toward it.

Paul distinguishes between what he wills, and what may *be done* by him. He recognizes a lower potency, which is active, the passions of the flesh and of the mind, the natural as over against the spiritual.

When this acts, it is not he, himself. "It is no more I . . . but sin that dwelleth in me."

That is, Paul here asserts the fact of a spiritual enslavement when the I, the ego, *does* not what the super-ego declares good and right, when there is a frightful impotence of the higher self, the real self before the power of the flesh.

He does not regard this condition as an innocent one, nor as having in it any promise of blessedness. On the contrary, this higher voice of his spiritual self, this voice of God, the divine imperative commands him, on the very peril of his soul, to obey. Failure to obey means death, means the continuance under the domination of his sarx, his flesh.

That it is more powerful does not help the soul toward release.

There is in this no excuse justifying further surrender. Who, he cries in his agony of enslavement, shall deliver me from the body of this death? Where is the one who, or that which shall enable my spirit born of God and now conscious of either the doom of death, death of spirit in the flesh, to escape, to rise, to seize its promised destiny, like the bird caged which longs for the sun?

Man may through weakness or despair give over hope and redemption, and may give himself up to this dominance of the flesh, but sooner or later every soul must cry as Paul cried, in an agony which increases as it is postponed and unanswered, for deliverance from the bondage and corruption of "sin in the flesh."

Salvation is perfect liberty of the self through perfect conformity to the will of God.

When man is what his enlightened conscience affirms that he ought to be, what God wills him to be, when he attains this his destiny, he has and is all that is subjectively necessary for his salvation. Man is not to be de-naturized, but spiritualized. It must be true as Tennyson says:

> Then most God-like when most a man.

Man is to attain harmony with that rational, larger, purer world, the heavenly, the beautiful world. As Sidney Lanier says:

> Sweet friends
> Man's love ascends
> To higher and diviner ends
> Than his mere thought comprehends.

And Dante tells us:

> Heaven round about us wheeling,
> Courts our gaze.

CONCERNING SALVATION

CONCERNING SALVATION

BY HARRY LATHROP REED

John xiv, 6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"The only port that in the last storm my shattered vessel can hope to take, or has any desire to take, is that of sovereign mercy;" were almost the last words of Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. His favorite text was: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." When Dr. Thomas Binney retired from his pulpit in London he appropriated as the expression of his own deepest convictions, the text: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living is righteous." Archbishop Usher died with the publican's prayer upon his lips. "With regard to myself," said William Wilberforce, when dying, "I have nothing to urge but the poor publican's plea: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" When Hugo Grotius lay dying at Rostock, the minister reminded him of the publican's prayer. "That publican, Lord,

am I," said Grotius; "God be merciful to me a sinner," and then he died. The prayer of the saints of all ages has been the motto that high up among the Alps the Dolomites have painted often upon their cottage doors,—"Misericordia, Jesu"—Jesus, Saviour of men, have mercy.* It is a significant fact.

The man who could say with all sincerity and humility: "As touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless;" with equal sincerity, describing the same period and condition of his life said: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. . . . For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

These are types of a common experience, a consciousness of sin; that is, a consciousness of a bondage, or a captivity, or a moral defect and impotence calling loudly for deliver-

* See *Expository Times,* June, 1900.

ance, not on the ground of merit or desert, but of mercy only.

Now it is a fact that, historically considered, "consciousness of sin is a relatively late experience." "Devout souls feel their wrongdoing as sin, grieve over their moral imperfections as a breach of perfect moral union with their supreme Ideal of a worthy life"—i. e. God. "The frequency and poignancy of this consciousness of sin do not depend on the multitude and magnitude of the individual's transgressions." "Thus," the psychologist tells us, "the experience is explained that those most sensitively constituted and highly developed religiously are most disturbed by the thought of their own wrongdoing. To lack the consciousness of sin is no sign of perfection but quite the reverse." Without cant or hypocrisy a Paul may call himself the chief of sinners. But no man dare call himself the least.

It is because of this that all the great world religions have been religions of salvation. They all seek to provide a way for the individual in his search for deliverance, and for more perfect union with God. "The way, the way!" is the significant phrase of each religion. The more devout the seeker, the

more intensely eager his search for the way.—

> "Falling with my weight of cares
> Upon the great world's altar-stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God,
> I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."

That is the experience of the seeker after the way.

Now, one world religion has by its fruits and by its victories, proved itself *the* world religion—and preëminently a religion of salvation, for its founder, from whom it takes its name, called himself *the Way,* because he was the truth and the life. It is to his claims for himself as Way, attested by those who knew him and wrote of him, and still more as borne out in the experience of those who have tried the Way, that we are to look for an expression of that which salvation means.

And all the more must we ever return to those conceptions of the way of salvation found in Scripture and experience, because in the course of the ages the conception has developed details of the way so varied and

so many, that they have included objectionable and even mischievous features. Subscription to a particular creed; adherence to a particular organization; worship in a particular way; reception of a particular form or rite; these and many others "have been incorporated into the doctrine of the way that lies between man and God." Augustine declares: "A man can have everything outside the church—only not salvation; and though he thinks he is living a good life, yet for the one crime of schism from the church, he will not have part in life, but the wrath of God abides on the schismatic."

It is to be remembered that even when we are considering the words of Jesus, we are considering those few words—out of the many that he spoke, (the worldful of books of them, had they all been written) which through long experience, meditation, preaching, the Spirit had brought to the remembrance, and kept in the remembrance of those who first heard them; and that the mental and spiritual needs of the writers, and their peculiarities of experience, must have had much to do with the memory's choice. Hence the various colors of thought, even in the Gospel records.

In the Synoptic Gospels the idea of sal-

vation is intimately bound up with that of the Kingdom of Heaven. "Salvation," some one has said, "is the reverse side of the gospel of the Kingdom, which was the burden of Jesus' preaching." In the Gospel according to John, it is *Life* which is the great word in the development of salvation—Life that is called eternal, æonian.

Jesus says that he came to seek and to save that which is lost. His name was to be called "Jesus," "for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." He says that he came to "give his life a ransom for many." And this conception was intimately connected with entrance into the kingdom. When Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," the disciples exclaimed: "Who then can be *saved?*" That was salvation.

To John, salvation was from death to life, and that life was a present, not merely a future, reality; and salvation was a present spiritual experience. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, *hath* eternal life, and cometh not into judg-

ment, but hath passed out of death into life."

And when we look more closely at John's conception of the nature of this life, we find it has two characteristics, illustrated by the luminous words "light and love—spiritual insight, holy affection."

The records in Acts, and in the letters of the Apostles, give further conceptions of the way of salvation. They are not necessarily later conceptions than those of the Gospels; they are to be placed side by side with them —each with its own personal and spiritual coloring. "Salvation" is the central theme of all the apostolic preaching, and Jesus is the Saviour. "Salvation has become almost a technical term to sum up all the blessings brought by the gospel." Peter sums it all up, when he says before the sanhedrin: "In none other in their salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

But the term includes a wide variety of detail. Paul says "Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners;* of whom I am chief." Again: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the *wrath* of God." Again: "Unto him that was able to save him from *death.*"

At Philippi the ventriloquist girl who shouted after Paul and Silas had caught their phrase: "These men . . . proclaim unto you *the way of salvation.*" The Philippian jailer had caught the phrase: "What must I do to be *saved*?" "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus," was the answer. But years later, writing to these same Philippians, Paul's exhortation was: "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God who worketh in you."

Yet again Paul writes: "By *grace* have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; *not* of works." And James says: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?" "Ye see that by *works* a man is justified, and not only by faith."

Or take this contrast: "Who, his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness," and, "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be *saved* by his life." Or this: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation," and "now is

salvation nearer to us than when we first believed."

And in addition to the salvation of the individual, Paul thinks of salvation as social—and even as cosmic—reaching out to take in the universe as a whole—"in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

These illustrations of the varied conceptions of salvation, taken almost at random, nevertheless fit into each other and supplement each other; salvation is deliverance in view of the consciousness of sin and of moral impotence, in view of the sore need that man feels of forgiveness, of reconcilement, of help. It is deliverance from sin, from death, from the wrath of God, from wrath to come: it is a deliverance by a Saviour, through faith, through works, of grace: it is a deliverance of the individual, of society, of all creation: it is a deliverance from the past, in the present, and for the future.

It is this last form of the conception that is the most comprehensive: there are three salvations,—or rather salvation is threefold. First of all it is deliverance from the past—from the guilt of sin. It means forgiveness

of sin, reconciliation with God. And second, it is deliverance from the power of sin in the present. And third, it is deliverance from the final result and stain of sin for all eternity.

I. We believe in the forgiveness of sins. We believe that salvation in its first and fundamental aspect is forgiveness of sin, and reconciliation with God, from whom sin has estranged mankind. We believe that Jesus Christ is the way of salvation, because first of all he is the way to the Father—he is the way of forgiveness of sin. We turn to the life and example of Jesus; we turn to his words, as they had interpretation and confirmation in the experience of those who heard them and followed them out to their logical end; and we turn to the experience of all those who have sought the Father through the Way, Christ Jesus.

We ground our belief in reconciliation to God on some of the facts of Jesus' life and teaching, which experience has amply tested. In the first place there is forgiveness—simply as a fact—without questions of how or on what conditions. Jesus has convinced us of the reality of forgiveness. He did it by examples. Forgiveness is best understood by examples. Jesus himself forgave. He was

always forgiving. And he had much to forgive. His friends deserted him, he forgave them; Peter denied him inexcusably, repeatedly, wantonly; Jesus' look of forgiveness nearly broke Peter's heart. His enemies pursued him, vilified him, condemned him, crucified him; he forgave them unasked, and prayed for their forgiveness.

He claimed to have the authority on earth to forgive sins, and he forgave them, and the forgiveness was a fact. To the palsied man he said, Thy sins are forgiven; to the woman in Simon's house, he said, Thy sins are forgiven; and their sins were forgiven.

Further, he was always talking about forgiveness as a reality: "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven;" "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses;" "Love your enemies . . . that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

And still further he illustrated forgiveness by story and parable; by the parable of the wicked servant; by the parable of the two debtors; and, most wonderful and beautiful of all by the story of the lost son, the whole glory of which is in the reality of forgiveness.

That first: Jesus made forgiveness real by example and illustration. "Forgiveness,"

some one has said, "was present and incarnate in him."

But more: He showed himself the way to God by interpreting sin and forgiveness in terms of personal pronouns. Forgiveness of sin is the forgiveness of the sinner. The sin is forgotten, the sinner is forgiven. The Psalmist and the Old Testament saints realized that. They deal very little with sinners in the abstract, or with sin and forgiveness as mental conceptions. Drummond says: "The Psalms will ever be the standard work on sin." It never occurred to the Psalmist that sin was anything but a personal relation to God, or that forgiveness was "impossible, or self-contradictory or immoral." "When he sinned he knew he sinned against God." "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight." "Have mercy upon *me,* O God, according to thy lovingkindness . . . blot out *my* transgressions." "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, . . . who forgiveth all *thine* iniquities." And Jesus emphasized and clarified that conception, and has done it for all generations. In this was he the *Way* to God, in that he magnified the personal relationship of God to man, and of man to God, and turned man's thought to that personal re-

sponsibility which resulted. And when Jesus said: "One of you shall betray me," the whole teaching of his life compelled his followers to a personal inspection. Not one of them said, "Is it Judas? Is it Peter?" But each man said, honestly, fearfully: "Is it I?"

And then again we ground our belief in forgiveness of sin on the fact of God as Father. And Jesus is the way to the *Fatherhood* of God. "Forgiveness is possible if God is our heavenly Father." If God is love, forgiveness is possible. And we know him as love, we know him as Father, because Christ has led us to him. He is the way. His own relationship to the Father is a revelation of the Father.

And it is here that the story of the Prodigal Son is such a perfect illustration. If he *is* our Father he is reaching out hands of forgiveness from afar. That forgiveness has power to reach even to the far country, and to draw, out of his misery and sin, the lost son back to the waiting Father. "Forgiveness," Frederick Robertson said, "is the declaration of the highest name of God—*love.*" And such forgiveness is reconciliation. The way back from estrangement to reconciliation is the way of forgiveness. It is far more

than a cancelling of the past—it is the admission again of the Father into a life from which he had been shut out. To this, Christ is the way. "He that hath seen *me,* hath seen the Father."

And then there is a deeper sense in which Christ is the way. There are more than personal relations involved, when we sin against God. "Forgiveness does present difficulties to men who dwell mentally among natural laws, and in the realm of abstract ideas." How can God forgive sins? If there is a moral order in the universe; if God is a moral being; if he is infinite in his justice, then forgiveness is not a cheap thing. It can be no human unconcern that says to the penitent offender: "Don't mention it." But fortunately for our belief in salvation, and for our relation to God, all theories of *how* God can forgive sin, all theories of the atonement, so-called, are not in themselves the way to God. As Dr. Denney says: "The great doctrines of the death of Christ as an expiation for sin, or of the ideas associated with such New Testament words as, 'In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,'—these doctrines are rather *the fruit of reflection on forgiveness, than the way to experience forgive-*

ness." "The way is Jesus Christ. It is in his company that you will learn the possibility and the reality of pardon; and you will learn these things as you learn all that is great and priceless in life, as you learn to believe in God, or in the love of your mother, in ways too subtle and complicated for any doctrinal statement." But this also becomes very clear, that forgiveness does cost, that it is made possible only through a passion of love that can find expression in nothing save the tragedy of a tremendous sacrifice. If sin is really abhorrent to God—if it is really the blackest thing in the universe, then anything that makes God's forgiveness of sin cheap and easy, that implies that he can forgive merely as man forgives, is an insult to God and a crime against man. It makes that which to man is misery, suffering, death, in God's sight a matter of little or no concern. It is this great *cost* of forgiveness that has forever been the convincing argument for God's love, and the attracting power to the son in the far country—the cross of Christ. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." The way of forgiveness is the way of the cross. And when we are led far afield into explanations

of how and why, we lay ourselves open to the charge that Luther once brought against Erasmus: "Your thoughts concerning God are too human."

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind:
But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own."

II. But there is more in salvation than the forgiveness of sin, just because there is more in sin than its guilt. Sin is a very present power. Salvation from the past is forgiveness and reconciliation and restoration. But salvation for the present is power to overcome power. "If remission of sins stood alone," some one has said, "it would leave us unsaved."

Much as Jesus said concerning sin and forgiveness, he said even more by word and by example concerning a present, active, overcoming life. Every man to whom he has appealed has felt that reconciliation is but the beginning of salvation. Deliverance from the guilt of sin is one thing—deliverance from its power is another. "A character-

istic feature of the primitive community of Christians," says Harnack, "is that every individual in it, even the very slaves, possesses a living experience of God."

The Apostle John possessed it, and his Gospel is the expression of what he found Jesus' words to mean—salvation a deliverance from death to a life. Paul possessed it, and the possession explains his words: "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." This was the Paul who was apprehended on his way to Damascus, by the strong hand of the Lord, who was saved from his bondage to the law, to sin and to death. Yet after a quarter of a century of salvation he writes: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus." Attainment, perfection, the revelation of Christ in him, character Christlike, this was that for which he conceived that he had been apprehended.

"It takes life to redeem life; it takes power to meet power." That life and that power we believe to come through a vital union with Christ Jesus, who is the *way,* because he is

the life. A mystical union it may seem to be, it is none the less real and vital. Jesus taught it when he called himself the bread of life, the water of life, the vine in which are the branches; when he said: "Ye in me and I in you;" "He that hath the Son hath life." Paul felt it when he said: "And it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me;" when he said: "For to me to live is Christ;" when he said: "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God who worketh in you;" when he used that favorite phrase of his, so often recurring, "in Christ, in Christ!" By his life and the power of his life, lives may be redeemed daily from the power of destruction. "To be saved, according to our Lord is first of all to be reconciled to God as Father, and then to enter upon a life fitted to the children of such a Father." What are the characteristics of that life? What are the distinctive characteristics of Jesus, which separate him from all others? The author of "The Fact of Christ" says they are four —Purity, Love, Forgiveness, Humility—not the only characteristics of the Christlike life, but those that are distinctive. Perhaps a more comprehensive statement of them is: filial dependence on God and devotion to his will, and brotherly service.

There is that side of a saved life that faces only toward God our Father. There are victories to be won, the struggles which can be shared with no human soul; when man can come off conqueror only through union with him who having been tempted is able to succor them that are tempted; who himself was made perfect through suffering. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Only a present, daily, constraining power can save a life from the power of sin, save it to filial devotion and Godlike purity of heart. And then there is the other side of the saved life, that faces manward. Its daily expression is service. We are saved to serve. "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man *also* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The salvation that does not have in it that element of service is a misnomer. The life that does not serve is not saved.

It is through this large feature of *service* that we are to look for a salvation that is not

individual merely but social—for a kingdom of heaven on earth—for a society purified and ennobled and illumined till it is worthy of the title, The City of God. Call it the Church, call it the Communion of Saints, call it the Heavenly Kingdom—it is God's ideal *only* when it is society saved.

III. This is salvation for the present—deliverance from the power of sin. There is a third salvation—a third conception of a threefold salvation—salvation for the future. It enters largely into our belief. It is reserved for the fuller statement concerning the future life. To many it has seemed the chief element of all. The burden of much preaching has been: Flee from a punishment to come—be saved to a future life. But the real emphasis is on the present. "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him." We shall be saved even from the stains of sin, that have been so unescapable here.

We believe in a salvation from the guilt of sin; that is the past. We believe in a salvation from the power of sin; that for the present. For both of them Jesus Christ is the way. And we believe in an "inheritance

incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a *salvation* ready to be revealed in the last time." A saved life—a life of salvation —and then more salvation ready to be revealed—and for it all Christ is the way. And to that deliverance of the future we see the whole creation looking and moving. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered (saved) from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." A freed creation! The last enemy to be destroyed,—Death.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! . . . For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen."

CONCERNING THE CHURCH

CONCERNING THE CHURCH

BY EDWARD WAITE MILLER

Colossians i, 18: "And he is the head of the body, the church."

In the Old Roman Symbol, the ancestor of our so-called Apostles' Creed, is this statement: "I believe in the holy Church." This earliest rule of faith or baptismal confession, dating from the latter half of the second century, underwent gradual expansion and a few centuries later the article concerning the Church came to read: "I believe in the holy Catholic Church." In these words, for perhaps 1500 years, western Christendom has affirmed its belief in a universal Christian community.

It has always been recognized that belief in the Church was a necessary article of Christian faith. Religion is a principle of association among men, and the religion of Christ is, above all others, essentially social. No man can live the full Christian life in willful isolation from his fellows. The spirit of brotherhood is its vital breath. In order to

become a disciple of Christ, one must recognize his other disciples. To be his friends, we must admit his other friends into our friendship. To be his servants, it is required that we acknowledge and coöperate with all those who like ourselves are striving to do his will and advance his kingdom.

Hence belief in a Christian community is an essential part of the Christian faith. This Christian community, conceived of as a visible organization, we call the Church. Because it is a religious community, we speak of it as the holy Church. Because we conceive of all its branches and divisions as constituting one great religious unit, we call it the holy Catholic, that is, universal, Church.

Regarded from any point of view, the Christian Church is an imposing institution. It is venerable with age. No other institution—save the family and the state—has endured so long. It stands firmly rooted in one of the primary human instincts, religion. It has been sustained and extended by the most uncalculating and heroic devotion. It has overcome powerful enemies. It has survived its own mistakes and disloyalties. It has made alliance with all the beneficent forces in human society. It has inspired and been ministered to by all the arts.

It has directed the development of our civilization. It has molded the ethical ideals of the dominant nations of the world.

In approaching many an old European city, long before you can distinguish anything else belonging to the city, you see its ancient church or cathedral, towering above every other structure, dominating the whole life of the community. So stands the Christian Church in the history of the last fifteen centuries.

And it stands to-day stronger numerically and morally than ever before. And it to-day gives greater promise than ever before of realizing its divine Founder's ideal—of bringing the whole world under its beneficent influence. Such an institution, whether we grant it our personal allegiance or not, commands our earnest interest, and calls for an adequate explanation.

It is possible to construct a theory of the nature and the purpose of the Church as it exists to-day, without considering its origin or history. But we shall certainly be more likely to arrive at a correct conception of the genius of the Church if we examine the ideals of its Founder and of its first members.

In the New Testament the word Ecclesia,

which has come to be translated Church, occurs something over a hundred times. Though it appears oftenest in the writings of Paul, yet it is used by nearly all the other New Testament writers. It consequently represents a conception familiar to first disciples of Christ.

The word had a history, and its history must have largely determined its meaning as used by Christ and his followers. Ecclesia was the Greek equivalent for a Hebrew word meaning either the assembly or congregation of the Israelitish people called together for some special purpose, or the whole people of Israel regarded as a political or religious unit. This double meaning—either the national assembly or the nation itself—would be the significance of Ecclesia to a Greek-speaking Jew of the time of Our Lord. To a Greek, however, the word would have a more restricted meaning. To him it would signify a popular assembly of all the citizens of a Greek town or city called together by a herald to transact public business.

The writers of the New Testament use the word Ecclesia or Church with both its Jewish and Greek meanings, but very naturally the word gained a peculiar significance of its own, when it was applied to the assembly of

the followers of Christ in a given locality or in the world at large.

The main thing to be remembered is that the word that we translate Church had roots, both in Jewish history and in the political constitution of the Greek cities. While meaning primarily an assembly or congregation, it had associations, on the one hand with the whole people of Israel regarded as a religious unit, and on the other hand with the sovereign assemblies of the citizens in any Greek municipality, the "town-meeting." Such were the notions connected with the word Church when it came to be applied to associations formed of the followers of Christ.

It is an interesting fact that in the recorded words of Our Lord there are but two occasions on which he uses the word Church, Ecclesia. The first of these is in his familiar words to Simon Peter, who had just confessed his faith in him as the Son of God. He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." In this statement Christ discloses the fact that he is to have an Ecclesia, that his followers are to form a religious community like the chosen people of God in the past, the faithful descendants of faithful Abraham.

The only other occasion on which Our Lord is reported to have used the word Church was a few months later. He is giving his disciples directions as to their treatment of a brother who has given offense, and in spite of considerate, brotherly treatment, remains obdurate. His words are: "And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." There Christ speaks of his Church, the community of his followers, as already in existence, and as possessing disciplinary powers.

It is not to be assumed that because Christ did not oftener use the word Church that the idea and design of his Church was not constantly present in his mind.

Nothing is more clear than that Christ contemplated the founding of a religious society, through which his influence should be perpetuated, and the kingdom of God should be realized. To the instruction of the future leaders of this society he gave the utmost care. The terms of admission to this society he established in faith and repentance and baptism. For the spiritual unity of this society he prayed in his high-priestly prayer. To revive the loving remembrance of himself

in this society he instituted the sacrament of his supper. To assure its members of his triumph over death he appeared to them repeatedly after his resurrection. To them he gave the commission to disciple all nations. And to enable them to discharge this commission he promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In this sense Christ may be said to have established a society of his adherents. On two occasions, at least, he applied to this society the name Church, thus connecting it in thought with the chosen people of God in the past. His followers recognized that they constituted such a society, and applied to themselves the term Church. They used the word in the singular, when they thought of the whole body of Christ's followers in the world. And they used the word in the plural, when they thought of the various groups of Christ's followers in the widely scattered regions into which Christianity has spread.

The separation of this new Christian Church from the old Jewish Church was accomplished gradually, and under the direction of the Apostles. It was the detachment of the seed of a new religion from the husk in which it had developed. It came about inevitably, as the proportion of Gentile con-

verts in the Churches increased, and as the universal purpose of Christianity became more clearly apprehended.

Thus the society which Christ formed within the Jewish Church became during the lifetime of his immediate followers a society outside the Jewish Church and in the great Roman world.

Now, the characteristics of this earliest Christian society are of the greatest interest to us. Not because they constitute an inflexible model, after which the Church should always be organized. Far from that. But rather because they display certain spiritual qualities which we may well regard as essential to the true life of the Church in any age.

There are three suggestive figures under which Paul represents the Church in her relation to Christ. The first is the spiritual union, the relationship of love and dependence and protection, that exists between husband and wife. This conception also appears in the Book of the Revelation, in which the Church is spoken of as "the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

The Church is also represented under the figure of a "spiritual house" or temple, consisting of believers, who as "living stones" are built upon Christ the chief corner stone,

and constitute a habitation for the spirit of God. This conception of the Church as a growing building is elaborated by St. Peter in a way that seems reminiscent of Christ's words to him concerning the building of his Church.

The third figure, used frequently by Paul, is even more suggestive. It sets forth, not only the Church's relation to Christ, but the relation of Christians to each other, because of their relation to Christ. It represents the Church as a living body—a human body, if you please,—of which Christ is the head of the animating spirit. It is his life that vitalizes it. It is his spirit that directs its activities. The Church is his body, and those who constitute the Church are vitally bound together by mutual dependence and coöperation, as are the different members and functions of the human body. For their life and unity they depend upon Christ, their head. The Church, as so conceived, is a visible expression of Christ's life in human society, a kind of permanent incarnation of his spirit.

But this imagery of the Apostles in which the Church is conceived of as the bride of Christ, loved and protected by him; as a living, growing temple of the Holy Spirit; as a body animated by the very life of Christ—

this imagery, however suggestive of the ideal relations of the Church to her Lord, is not so instructive as is the picture of the actual Church drawn for us in the Acts and in the Epistles. Here we see the Church begin, and live its life for a generation.

There are three features of the Church, as it thus appears in the New Testament, that call for special attention. The first feature to be noticed is *the democratic spirit* manifest in these earliest Christian communities. The Apostles, as might be expected from their close association with Christ, have prominence in the Churches as authoritative religious teachers. But the principle of self-government manifests itself from the very beginning. Even the eleven Apostles did not venture, by themselves, to complete their original number by appointing a successor to Judas. But they submitted the matter to the will of the whole Church. The "seven" in the Church at Jerusalem were not appointed by the Apostles, but were elected by the whole congregation. The great issue as to the treatment of Gentile converts, which became acute in the Church at Antioch, was not determined by the Apostles, but by a council composed of all the Christians at Jerusalem. These are representative examples

of the democratic spirit and self-government of the earliest Churches.

The Apostles treat their fellow-believers, not as subjects to be ruled, but as fellow-citizens in the Christian commonwealth. All the followers of Christ were regarded as belonging to a royal priesthood; and their right to teach or participate in public worship was determined solely by their spiritual endowments. So far from arrogating governmental authority to themselves, the Apostles describe themselves as the servants of the Churches.

There is no governmental primacy of Peter or of any other Apostle discoverable in the New Testament. What Peter understood by Our Lord's reference to him as the rock on which he would build his Church may be best determined by Peter's own declaration that Christ is the chief corner stone of the Church, and also by his ready submission of matters relating to the policy of the Church to the judgment of his brethren.

And the meaning of Our Lord's words concerning the binding and loosing power of the Church must be interpreted by the fact that the discipline of the earliest Churches was exercised, not by the Apostles, but by the Churches themselves. The Apostles show

no disposition to lord it over God's heritage, but by humility and service they commend themselves as "ensamples to the flock."

The second fact to be noticed is the *variety manifest in all the eternal features of the Apostolic Church.*

The earliest believers, scattered by persecution or impelled by missionary zeal, soon established Christian communities in Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and on the north shore of Africa.

These Churches were started in a variety of ways, and often without apostolic oversight or knowledge. Their meetings were held in synagogues and hired halls, in private houses and in the open air.

Their adherents were Jews of different sects and Gentiles of different races. They continued to observe their national customs. The Epistles of St. Paul and the letters to the seven Churches of Asia indicate how little uniformity there was in the Churches as to doctrine and worship,—and, indeed, as to the manifestation of the Christian virtues.

And if we look at their form of organization, we shall discover that the Christian communities, in different parts of the Roman world, were free to organize themselves by adopting that form of association with

which they were already most familiar. A close scrutiny of the rather meager references to the officership of the earliest Churches will reveal at least five different types of organization. Each Church appears, also, as an independent, self-governed community.

Here then is the utmost freedom and variety in the external features and organization of the earliest Churches.

But amid all this variety in externals, we notice, as a third feature of the Apostolic Church, that it is marked by *unity in spirit and purpose*. The many Churches consciously compose one Church. Their common relationship to Christ unifies them in spirit, in spite of all their external differences.

The ancient Jewish Ecclesia, the Israelitish people, had been conceived of as one, despite the fact that it was divided into tribes, and later dispersed through the nations. So the Christian Ecclesia, however widely scattered its members might be, or differently organized, was readily conceived of as forming one spiritual brotherhood, one body of which Christ was the head.

But its unity was not due to similarity in form of organization, or the recognition of

any central human authority. It was "the unity of the Spirit." And it expressed itself in ways that had a degree of spiritual significance that mere uniformity in organization and customs would not have possessed.

The conscious unity of the early Church rested upon facts like these: The followers of Christ everywhere had been taught substantially the same gospel. They shared in the same sacraments. They entertained a common hope of the coming of the kingdom. They exhibited the common gifts and graces of the Spirit. They exercised abounding hospitality toward each other, and sent generous relief even to distant brethren whom famine or other disaster had brought to want. The Churches maintained intercommunication by letters or special messengers. And, moreover, there existed a group of men who traveled from one Christian community to another, preaching the gospel, and affording personal bonds between the scattered Churches. In Paul and Barnabas we have familiar examples of these servants of the Church at large. It was by such means that the spirit of unity was maintained and expressed in the earliest Christian communities.

Such is the Church as it appears in the writings of Christ's immediate followers. It

is a visible religious fellowship, composed of many and widely scattered, independent Christian communities. It is marked by democracy in government, variety in external features, conscious unity of spirit and aim.

It is a fellowship both divine and human. For the conditions of membership are twofold: on the one hand, union of faith and love and obedience with God through Christ; and on the other hand, a union of trust and love and service with fellow-believers in Christ.

I have dwelt thus long upon the characteristics of the Church of the age of the Apostles for several reasons. In the first place, we may well believe that the immediate followers of Christ founded a society in which all the essential features of Christianity found expression. It would appear vain to insist upon anything in doctrine or custom, as absolutely essential to Christianity, which had no existence in the Church as founded by those who knew Christ intimately.

Again, we have noticed that the unity of the Apostolic Church was a unity of spirit, and was not due to the external features of its life. It was their common love and obedience to Christ that made these early Christians one.

To realize this unity of the Church in spite

of differences of race and custom and doctrine and individual leadership and occasional misunderstanding—that was an act of Christian faith. No one but a follower of Christ could realize that these many different Churches formed one Church. For that fact could only be discerned by one who had something of the Spirit of Christ.

And in this respect, the situation is practically the same to-day. The great diversities in the external aspects of the Church, its many forms of organization, its wide differences in doctrine and custom—these make the recognition of the unity of the Church an act of faith,—that is, of spiritual insight. To believe that there is to-day a "holy catholic Church" is possible only to those who have seen beneath that which is external and superficial in Christianity, and have penetrated to its heart—have realized that as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, and that these constitute a divine-human brotherhood, of which the Church is the visible expression and agency.

No doubt it would have been much easier for the earliest Christians to realize the unity of the Church if the Apostles had organized the Churches uniform in every particular, and all had acknowledged allegiance

to Peter. But in that case the unity of the Church would have seemed to rest upon its external features, not upon a common love for Christ and a mutual love and service. And such a fatal misunderstanding, the diversities in the Apostolic Church fortunately made impossible.

And those who to-day look for a Reunion of Christendom in which the unity of the Church shall express itself in uniformity of organization, or custom, or dogma even will find little to sustain their expectations, either in the Church as it was founded by the Apostles or as it appears in any age since.

For there has never been a time when the Church has existed as a perfectly homogeneous society, similarly organized everywhere, uniform in doctrine and worship, and acknowledging one central human authority. Such an idea of the Church is a dream, and a dream with but small promise of realization.

The Reunion of Christendom is not to be achieved in that way, but by a completer possession and exercise of that faith and hope and love which are the essentials of Christianity.

It was not uniformity, but unity of spirit among his followers for which Christ prayed. And one of the great tasks of the Apostolic

Age, and of every age since has been to maintain, as Paul expresses it, "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." And this he declares is a unity that rests upon the recognition of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

This conception of the Apostolic Church affords us the necessary starting point from which to follow the long course of the Church's development in organization and custom and doctrine. For it is possible to trace the development of this free spiritual brotherhood in which the Church began, through gradual changes and expansion, into a great ecclesiastical institution, coextensive with the Roman world, and organized according to principles derived partly from the Old Testament, partly from classic paganism, partly from the political constitution of the Empire itself. Instead of the democracy of the early Church we have sacerdotalism enthroned, the Church is ruled by Bishops and Archbishops and Patriarchs, claiming to have derived from the Apostles an authority that the Apostles themselves never claimed.

But the visible unity of the Church thus attained was not so much the expression of "the unity of the Spirit," as it was the result

of uniformity in organization, and of external constraint. The Church was one, because the Roman world was one. It was the State Church of the Empire. And when the Roman Empire broke into two parts, the East and the West, the Church also broke in two along the lines of natural cleavage, the old differences in spirit or temperament between the Greek and the Latin peoples. The Church hereafter appears in two great divisions, the Latin Church, whose administrative center is Rome, and the Greek Church, whose center is Constantinople. Each claims to be the only true successor of the Church of the Apostles. We cannot say that the Church lost her unity by this formal separation into two organizations. She had long before lost the only unity of any worth; for her early love and confidence and coöperation had given place to misunderstanding and jealousy and hatred.

The Greek Church has in the main preserved her organic unity until the present. But the Latin Church in the 16th century lost, by revolt, nearly all the nations of northern Europe.

To many it no doubt seemed that the Protestant Reformation destroyed the unity of Western Christendom. But it really did

no more than reveal the disunity that had already developed between the Latin and Teutonic elements in the Church. They had lost their spiritual cohesion and were held together only by external pressure.

So the Church appears to-day in three great divisions, the Greek Church, the Roman Church, and the Protestant Church. But that these Churches in spite of their division and defects constitute one Church of Jesus Christ, holy and catholic, is the affirmation of our deepest faith and highest hope and most Christian love. To believe it, as one discovers the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of adherents to every branch of the Church is the surest proof and the best reward of Christian charity, while to doubt it is to impugn God's providential direction of his Church, to narrow our religious sympathies, and to refuse recognition to those who are the friends of Christ.

This does not require that we ignore or condone the grave defects that exist in our own and in the other branches of the Church. It is simply to estimate the Church, as we estimate any other institution, not by its defects, but by its excellencies, by the tasks it has accomplished, by the services it has ren-

dered, by the blessings it has conferred upon mankind.

This is the creed of Protestantism regarding the Church, declared in all her great confessions. We believe that the marks of the true catholic Church are the proclamation of the gospel, the celebration of the sacraments, the fruits of the Spirit.

It remains to speak of the Church in two practical relationships:

And first as to the Church's *authority in matters of religion.* Can we trust the Church to tell us what to believe regarding God and what to do in our various human relationships? In other words, how far do the doctrine and discipline of the Church afford us a guide to belief and conduct? Not an infallible guide, certainly. That is not to be expected. In religion, as in all the great ventures of life, God requires us to exercise our own best judgment. He expects us to find the wisdom of God for our guidance, when, in humble dependence upon him, we use our own highest wisdom.

But although not infallible, the guidance of the Church is nevertheless adequate to the practical needs of life.

And the fact that we do not give unques-

tioning acceptance and obedience to the deliverances of the Church, does not release us, in any sense, from religious obligation. It simply means that the moral imperative under which we act, is not to be regarded as something external to ourselves, though it be a great historic religious institution. We are required to put the Church's creeds and mandates to the test of our own moral judgment and act upon our own approval of them.

By this means the authority of the Church evokes the authority of our conscience. The voice of the Church finds an echo in the voice of God in our hearts. And this saves us from a mere intellectual acquiescence in the Church's creed, which is something less than faith, and a mere mechanical obedience to the Church's commands, which is something less than virtue.

The authority that the Church possesses she has derived primarily from Christ, her head. It is not so much the authority to rule, as it is the authority to teach. Christ is indeed a king, but he desires no other allegiance, than that which he wins by love. And the ultimate basis of his authority as a teacher is the sure answer of the human heart to his teachings. We recognize, as did Peter, that his words are "the words of

eternal life." Consequently, the authority of the Church rests upon the fact that she has preserved the image and the words, and, as has no other institution, the Spirit of Christ. To her has also been committed the priceless heritage of the Christian sacraments.

That the Church's interpretations of the words and Spirit of Christ have been kept free from all admixture of human error, no one would claim. But that in her creeds and discipline she has preserved the essentials of Christian faith and morals, no one will deny. For the surest test of the possession of the truth is the bearing of the fruits of the Spirit. And for nearly nineteen centuries the Church has been engaged in a vast enterprise, the emancipation of men from the thraldom of sin, and the cultivation of the graces of the Christian life. And during all these centuries, as a result of the teaching and nurture of the Church, men have won their way into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and have manifested the graces of the Spirit. Not always in equal degree, but always in a degree sufficient to indicate their reality.

Now this experiment has been tried so long, in so many lands, and among so many races, that it amounts to a demonstration that

the Church speaks with the authority of the truth.

Vincentius, a Gallic monk of the fifth century, said that one might be sure of the truth of those doctrines "that had been believed always, everywhere, and by everybody." That rule would reduce our faith to a very meager content. Much more safely may we accept those teachings of the Church which always, everywhere, and in everybody have produced the graces of faith and hope and love. For the kind of character that the Church forms by her teaching and nurture is a surer witness of the Spirit, a more convincing proof of her authority, than any theory of papal infallibility, or unbroken line of bishops, or inerrancy of ancient documents. And as so tested the Church is felt by every honest heart to speak with divine authority. We can safely trust her to teach what we should "believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man."

Let us notice, in conclusion, *the relation of the Church to the kingdom of God and to the service of Christ.* Though Christ spoke of his Church on but two occasions, he spoke of the kingdom of God constantly. To more perfectly establish this kingdom among men was his life purpose. His teachings are

chiefly concerned with the principles of this divine kingdom. He taught his disciples to pray for the coming of this kingdom. He sent them out to continue his work in establishing this kingdom in the world.

Christ nowhere gave a definition of the kingdom. But he made it very plain that it was unlike other kingdoms, in that its chief domain was the human heart. A man was admitted to citizenship therein, when he yielded allegiance to him.

But although the kingdom of God is found primarily in the hearts of those who love and obey God, yet it is a kingdom that assumes visibility as a common allegiance to Christ brings his followers into association and coöperation. It is by this means that the principles of the kingdom are realized in human society and express themselves in a social order in which the spirit of Christ reigns.

For although Our Lord did not define the kingdom, Paul did; and he defined it as "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." These are all social graces, possible only as the divine order is realized in our human relationships.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done," is the significant order of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The kingdom of God comes

as men do the will of God. And the will of God is that men should live, here and hereafter, in righteousness and peace and joy.

Consequently the kingdom of God represents ideal human society, mankind upon the highest possible plane of moral and material achievement. It is not a Utopia, an ideally happy region, nor a Golden Age. It is rather a state of human society, in which all that is best in man, his highest hopes, his noblest impulses, his divinest aspirations come to realization. Hence the kingdom of God, though it is always coming, can never fully come on earth. It is also the kingdom of heaven.

Now, although Christ does not state it in so many words, yet he makes it very plain that his Church was to be the agency through which his kingdom was to be brought in. This is also the thought of the Apostles. They gave their lives to the building up of the Church in order thereby to bring in the kingdom of God.

And that has been the attitude of intelligent Christians ever since. They have thought of the kingdom as finding expression in the Church; but as being something much larger than the Church. They have thought of the Church as existing, not for herself, but

for the extension among men of the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy. They have seen in her the appointed agency of Christ for the redemption of society.

There is in some quarters a disposition to magnify the importance of the kingdom to the disparagement of the Church. It is difficult to conceive of Christ taking such an attitude. For it is the Church against which he declares "the gates of Hades shall not prevail." It is the Church, the Apostles affirm, that "he purchased with his own blood." It is the Church that is "the pillar and ground of the truth." It is the Church through which there might be made known to all men "the manifold wisdom of God."

The Church is God's agency for the establishment of his kingdom among men, and without his Church there would be no kingdom—at least as we know it. Such is the New Testament teaching.

And the long history of the Church makes this fact very plain and impressive. The life of Christianity has been transmitted from generation to generation through the Church. She has been the channel through which the stream of divine grace has flowed down the centuries. It is impossible to trace a consecutive development of the kingdom except

through her, and it is her life alone that gives continuity to the progress of the Christian civilization.

For it was the Church, as an organization, that gathered up all that was best in the classic age, and infusing into it a new spirit, saved it from the destruction that overwhelmed the Roman Empire.

It was the Church also that transmitted the priceless heritage of the classic culture through all the ignorance and social chaos of the Middle Ages, and thus provided the basis of our modern civilization.

And what the Church has done for the development and transmission of that sum of institutions and influences that we call our Christian civilization, she has done for every individual element of it. There is not a single wholesome factor in our boasted civilization which has not directly or indirectly received its inspiration from the Church.

There are many beneficent agencies in our day which are children of the Church, but have quite lost the knowledge of their parentage. To conceive of them as rivals of the Church, or as substitutes for the Church, is to ignore their origin, and the sources from which they still draw their life. None of these children of the Church, however unfilial

their spirit, could long survive their mother. And the best way to render these philanthropic agencies strong and efficient is to strengthen the Church from which they derive their vitality.

If you desire to serve Christ in the service of your fellow-men, then the surest way to make your life count for the betterment of mankind is by personal alliance with the Church—which is Christ's agency for the bringing in of his kingdom. The mere fact of your alliance with the Church at once gives positiveness to your influence. It aligns you with the forces that make for righteousness. It associates you with the friends—not the foes—of Christ. And, what is scarcely less important, alliance with the Church will conserve and transmit your influence to posterity. The moral energies of your life will become a part of her deathless life, and will grow with her growth. Thus the streams of your personal influence, instead of being evaporated or lost in the arid wastes of earth, will unite to swell the great life-giving current of the Church, and be borne along in her ever enlarging service to mankind.

And what inspiration can come to us—save the blessed influence of Christ our Saviour—more fitted to sustain us in high endeavor and

unselfish service than the reassuring consciousness that we are a part of the greatest, divinest institution that the world has ever known? An institution that has seen empires rise and fall, and that with each century has added countless multitudes to her adherents, an institution that is to-day pressing her peaceful conquests in every land and people upon the face of the earth, that already dominates the thought and policy of the dominant nations of the world, that with each passing year extends her sway over the hearts of men, and tightens her grip upon the conscience of the world!

What other human brotherhood is to be compared with her?

And to what nobler purpose can we devote our lives than by swearing allegiance to her divine Master, and by participating in her blessed ministries of love and service?

CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION

CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION

BY JAMES STEVENSON RIGGS

Over the event which this glad Easter day commemorates there can be no possible exaggeration of true rejoicing. Because of it Christian song has in it an abiding note of triumph and Christian life an inextinguishable hope.

"'Tis the spring of souls to-day;
Christ hath burst His prison,
And from three days' sleep in death
As a sun hath risen;
All the winter of our sins,
Long and dark, is flying
From His light, to whom we give
Laud and praise undying."

In the brief time at my disposal let me try to tell you what the intelligent faith of the Church is regarding this momentous reality. It would be surprising if a fact and teaching so central and essential had never been questioned. Indeed the vital character of both has been shown in the serious determined questioning they have constantly been called

to face. The "time-spirit" of every age has busied itself with them. Our own time has asked its questions prompted thereto by conceptions born of the scientific and historical spirit, and one of the results which this spirit has sought to establish I find most convenient to use in order to bring the whole subject before you. That attempted result is a distinction between "The Easter Message" and "The Easter Faith." The Easter message is the story of the empty grave and of the various appearances of the risen Lord to the disciples. That, says the "time-spirit" of our day, is of little worth and can be given up. "The Easter Faith" which is the conviction that Jesus still lives with God is the vital matter and must be kept. It is as you see an attempt to keep the religious value of the doctrine of the resurrection, while denying the historical fact upon which the religious value is supposed to rest. No actual resurrection of Jesus took place and yet Jesus lives. That is its judgment. What is supposed to be the exalted and spiritual character of this settlement of the matter has been its fascination. It is a long way from the crude denials of two generations ago. While it dismisses the miraculous it seems to offer much to faith. It is no sweeping denial. All the terms which

set forth the recognition of a present, living, exalted Christ it adopts and sanctions. In one point it agrees with all the skepticism of the past. There was no grave in a Judæan garden made empty by a physical resurrection. The message of the angel at the sepulcher was never spoken. That this is not the faith of the Christian Church you well know. I wish however, to say a few things about the fact itself. From the time Paul wrote about it (and his letter to the Corinthians is earlier than the Gospels in their present form) the actual rising of Jesus from the dead has been to the Church one of the cardinal facts of His experience. Our acceptance of the fact is of course based upon the evidence of the Scripture and there are some considerations connected with this evidence to which I wish to call your especial attention. First, that while there are notable variations in the reminiscences of the appearance of Jesus, all the variations bear witness to two facts; the empty grave and the risen Lord. We know now enough of the manner in which the gospel originated to give a rational explanation of the variations, so much so as to allow them to constitute no substantial argument against truthfulness. Indeed harmonization of all details into a perfectly jointed account is no

longer an aim in the study of the Gospels. They are not histories in our sense of the term, but memorabilia, personal reminiscences, incomplete from the beginning and given from varying points of view. Again it is well to note how varied are the witnesses to the death and burial of Jesus. The Roman soldiers whose custom it was to break the legs of the victims of crucifixion came to the cross of Jesus and refrained from their cruel purpose because they saw that He was dead already. To be sure of death, however, a soldier pierced His side with a spear. (John xix, 33–34.) Joseph of Arimathæa desiring to give Jesus honorable burial went to Pilate and asked for the body. Pilate wondering that He was so soon dead (victims of crucifixion lingered hours in awful anguish) sent for the Roman centurion and asked him for the facts. The centurion reported that He had been dead for some little time and so Pilate gave Joseph permission to take the body. (Mark xv, 43–45.) To that sepulcher hewn in stone, where up to that time man had never yet lain, Joseph, Nicodemus and the group of Galilæan women took the body of their Master. (Matt. xxvii, 59–61; Mark xv, 46–47; Luke xxiii, 53–55; John xix, 39–42.) Against the door of the sepul-

cher a stone was rolled. To guard against any possible deception on the part of the disciples the Pharisees and chief priests went to Pilate and asked him to make the sepulcher sure in order that the disciples should not steal the body for the sake of backing up a statement that Jesus had made that He would rise from the dead. Pilate handed the matter over to them and they sealed the entrance and placed a guard. When the guard reported what had happened on the first Easter morning, the chief priests and the rulers bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while they slept. Mark the group that was in some way interested in that dead body —a Roman governor, Roman soldiers, Pharisees, chief priests, Joseph, Nicodemus and the Galilæan women. And what about the disciples? Were they in some secret place plotting to bolster up a prophecy about resurrection, as the Pharisees declared to Pilate they might? Convenient as these saddened and perplexed disciples have been in all theories which have tried to account for the resurrection faith without allowing an Easter message, they play the part assigned to them with very poor success. If ever men stood baffled before an utterly strange experience, they did

before the issues of Friday of Passion week. Jesus had tried to prepare them for it. From the days of Cæsarea Philippi He had been speaking to them plainly of His death and resurrection. At first they would hear nothing of it and they were exceedingly slow to take it in. We are not to be too ready to blame them. Current conceptions of the Messiah's glory were all in another direction and they were largely concerned with personal ambitions. But in view of the theories which had set them to work to create an Easter message, they were providentially dull. There never was a greater lot of moonshine than the rhetoric which draws visions of a risen Lord out of their deathless enthusiasms or in any way makes them psychologically ready to spring upon the world such a piece of imagination as should pass for fact through all these centuries of the Church's history. Their deathless enthusiasm did not save them from hurriedly leaving Jesus amid the uproar in Gethsemane and with the exception of Peter and John, their names are significantly absent from the record of the crucifixion scenes. If the Scripture is to be relied on at all, visionary hypotheses are pitifully lame in their psychology of resurrection constructions. The very frankness of the apostles

about themselves is good evidence that they are telling the truth and they give not the smallest space for such psychology to stand upon, and even if it could stand, what is to be said of the empty grave? The most recent life of Christ, which has come to us from Germany, says that Joseph of Arimathæa, sorry upon reflection that he had put Jesus, a crucified man, into his fine new sepulcher, went and took the body away. "Such," the writer adds, "seems to be the simplest explanation of this secret transaction." That "simplest explanation" requires us to believe that the friends of Jesus knew where the body was; at least, that they knew that He had not risen from the dead, while all the time "visions" were making them believe that He had and it requires us to believe that with the knowledge that His lifeless body was hidden in the small rock-tomb near Jerusalem, they were zealous to proclaim everywhere His resurrection from the dead, suffering all manner of contempt for their message and at the same time urging men to the most exalted standard of living. Another has earnestly tried to relieve the situation from such an incongruity by saying that the change in the whole attitude of the apostles was brought about by God-inspired visions, but it is cer-

tainly more satisfactory to believe that the faith of the disciples and the Church rests upon the fact of the resurrection than that it rests upon God-inspired visions given to create belief in a fact which after all was not a fact. No. The Easter message belongs with the Easter faith. Peter preached that message and on the day of Pentecost argued for the "empty grave" in his reference to a resurrection which avoided death's corruption; Paul preached it and made the same argument in the synagogue in Antioch and the Church has ever since made it the sure basis of the Easter faith. Were there no fact of this kind behind the faith and preaching of the apostles then the Christian consciousness which is the outcome of their convictions is based upon a deception; is begotten of falsehood. Let him think it who can.

And now what is the meaning of this fact? What is the content of our Easter faith? Why is the resurrection such a vital factor in the work of Redemption. I answer

I. Because it gave validity to the life and death of Jesus. In the first place it verified His own predictions. It is true that these had not so gotten hold of the minds of those to whom they were given as to make them look for and anticipate a resurrection, but they

had been uttered and were remembered. In the dark despair that would have settled down upon the disciples the falsity of His words would have sooner or later been emphasized, had these predictions never had fulfillment. But far more than the falsity of His words would have been the enigma of His whole mission. Difficult as it was for the disciples to adjust themselves to the truth which He uttered and the life which He lived and required of His followers, they nevertheless expressed something of the divineness there was in it. They had heard Him say that whosoever believed in Him should never die: that He had come to save the world; that He was to found a Church against which the gates of darkness should not prevail and yet He had Himself gone to the silence of the grave. How could such claims be consistent with His utter powerlessness over death? Recently a novelist took up the suggestion of Holtzmann that Joseph of Arimathæa had removed the body of Jesus from his grave and that beyond the imagination of the disciples that was all there was for belief in a resurrection. What resulted? The cross became the scaffold on which a good man was put to death. All that Jesus said about God's care and truth's imperishableness came to naught.

Calvary was a tragedy in more senses than the death of a good man. It was the death of the most vital hopes; the focal point of the world's despair. If there was one thing which Jesus loved to talk about it was "life" —that mysterious indefinable reality for which we are all, in some form, eager. He came to give it abundantly in its highest and truest realizations, and yet, if there was no empty grave—a few embittered ecclesiastics were able to make His words seem a mockery. To be sure He taught us exalted truth and lived it in radiant perfection, but after all He simply set up an excellent ideal and gave us no power to reach it. We must take up the dreary, wearying business of working our way to whatever heaven there is, with no certainty of attaining it. It is all well enough to say that "the religious consciousness to which Christianity has given birth is that which is of value to the twentieth century Christian" but it is of equal moment to remember "that in order that that consciousness might be born the first century disciple had to be convinced that the Jesus whom he had known and loved, whom he had seen crucified and buried, was not in the tomb but exalted to the right hand of God." What

is a life that has no holding form against the black, chilling shadow of death!

Even pagan speculation with the help of cold reason has been able to bridge the chasm of death. Have we nothing but the overwrought visions of a few Galilæan peasants to help us hope? Nay.

> "Strong son of God, immortal love
> Whom we, that have not seen thy face
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace
> Believing where we cannot prove.
>
> "Thine are these orbs of light and shade
> Thou madest life in man and brute,
> Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
> Is on the skull which thou hast made."

Had I time I should like to show how from that reality "life" which in the form of its resurrection glory touched his spirit on the Damascus road, Paul worked out his whole theology of the cross, finding in the presence of the Christ-life in his heart the meaning of the Messiah's mission from the very giving up of His equality with the Father to the final triumph when those who are Christ's shall come with Him in the completeness of resurrection. I should like to show you how John with that same ever-recurring realization in his mind, builds up his Gospel by the addition

of claim upon claim from the lips of Jesus until in the eleventh chapter, he tops them all with that word by the touch of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection, and the life," i. e. "I am the resurrection by being the life." In confirmation of that not only does Lazarus come out from the realm of death but immediately the story proceeds to show us how Jesus Himself walked through the grave to the limitless life beyond. It is true that the cross—symbol as it is of the righteousness and love of God—is the central object of this book of divine revelation, but I fear we do not always have as clearly in mind the fact that without the resurrection that cross would have been little more than a spectacular display—an object perhaps of adoration for those who could at all understand its expression of devotion to righteousness and its heroic self-sacrifice—but nothing more. If you think that statement exaggerates, listen to the words of Paul: "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished." Death has mastery all along the line. Thus on the side of the spirit, the resurrection is indispensable. Without it we might have been members of a Galilæan school—Jesus Himself being the master; we

never could have been what the Scripture calls "the body of Christ" unified and vitalized by the life of Him who is our head.

True as all this is and essential as it is, it is safe to say that the emphasis in our thoughts upon this Easter day is rather upon that phase of life's triumph long, long ago which has in it the promise for us of victory over the grave—in the resurrection of the body. Let me therefore speak for a few moments of the contents of our Easter faith from this point of view. As the resurrection of Jesus gave validity to His life and death in their bearing upon our spiritual resurrection, so

II. It gave the promise and pledge of the redemption of our complete personality. Personality as the Bible knows it is made up of soul and body. Man is not simply a spirit. He is an embodied spirit. There is no such doctrine in the Scriptures as "the immortality of the soul." That conception so fully inwrought into the speech of Christians is a Greek doctrine. The Bible teaches the immortality of man. It is significant how heathen cults have tried in various ways to keep the body for the departed soul. The heart instinctly draws back from a disembodied life. Its vagueness and shadow-likeness

not only baffle the imagination but chill the soul. There is not much comfort in the thought of an intermediate state—brighten it up as we may with our declarations about the presence of the Lord. As compared with the deliverances of theology, the New Testament says surprisingly little about it. If we could only come to see that the day of resurrection is not yet a long way ahead of us there would be little need for this halfway house to heaven and completed redemption. The significant fact is that in bringing life and immortality to light Jesus gave us the revelation of an entire redemption. How is this to be interpreted for us? The empty grave implies a literal physical resurrection. Is that what we mean when we say "I believe in the resurrection of the body?" The answer to that question must be made with care and to help to such carefulness let me call your attention to the twofold series of facts discoverable in the resurrection experiences of our Lord. In considering the fact of the resurrection I called your attention to the necessity for the first disciples of indisputable proof that their Lord whom they had seen cruelly put to death was alive again. To meet this necessity we see Him offering the print of the nails in His hands as a test

of identity; we hear Him saying to His disciples "handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having (Luke xxiv, 36–43). He eats of the broiled fish they had prepared for their evening meal. They are not to be mistaken; this is He who suffered on the cross. He was no ghost flitting about the hills of Judæa or along the Galilæan lake—but the incarnate Lord who had come from the grave. Eye, ear and hand were giving certitude of His presence. The purpose of that explicit, definite, unmistakable exhibition of Himself was to restore to them belief in His Messiahship and to lay deep and sure in their minds the faith which should be preached to the world.

Along with these facts, having this purpose, is another series which shows powers of another order. There is a mysterious side to that post-resurrection life. The limits of time and space do not seem to press upon Him who appears and disappears; who is here and there, as He wills. He sits at the table and as the wondering disciples discover Him He is gone. He enters through the closed doors, and stands in the midst of the startled group in the room in Jerusalem. The body can, when He wishes, seemingly perfectly assume the spiritual. Only when He

wills does He bring Himself to those relations which shall make His identity with their Lord of the days of the Galilæan ministry clear to His disciples. What is the relation of these two states has been long the subject of earnest speculation. Could He change from a physical to a wholly spiritual state? Was the physical body so dominated by the spirit that He could make it follow its behests in ways utterly unknown to us? An answer to any of these questions is but an opinion. Only this can we say—that new powers, new possibilities, a new glory are here evident. How much may we conclude from it? Let Paul answer. With a discrimination that reveals divine guidance does he seek to interpret for us the significance of the resurrection of Jesus. With an insistence which comes from his understanding of its value he lays emphasis upon the actual physical resurrection of his Lord. There he stops. It is not the physical which shall inherit the kingdom of heaven—flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. But how are the dead raised? And with what manner of body do they come? The answer begins with that argument from analogy whose first statement is "thou sowest not the body which shall be." There can be no such purpose in our resur-

rection as demanded the physical resurrection of our Lord. This body fitted for life here would be but a cumbersome machine for the life there. Its frailty, weakness and limitations; its needs, afflictions and diminishing power; its constituents, structure and stability—all these make it, wonderful as it is, but a feeble instrument for the spirit. How swiftly thought can outrun it! How easily beyond its boundaries can sweep the imagination! How it trembles and often fails under the pressure of intense emotion! It is along the line of that second series of facts that Paul gets his hints for something far, far better. And that we may just for a moment see what easy possibility there is for a body adopted to the boundless freedom of the spirit, he calls us to look all about us and into the heavens above where "one star differeth from another star in glory" and see what a rich variety of bodies God has made. And then his thought runs over that change which is needed before we shall be properly embodied for the life of eternity. Power, glory, honor, incorruption—these are the marks of that spiritual body or that body fitted to the spirit which shall make life beatific and service an abounding joy. All this he brings out of the spiritual quicken-

ing power of the risen Lord. The last Adam (the risen Christ) is a life-giving spirit. When once we have come into vital relations with Him the resurrection work begins which shall not end until a spiritual body shall clothe the redeemed spirit and the whole man shall be immortal. Death is swallowed up in victory. With what reason do we make this day glad with rejoicing! There is light enough in the fact it commemorates and the promise it holds forth to illuminate every place darkened by sorrow. It can make us ready to look death fearlessly in the face and the glory of an endless life will but make its blessing even greater.

CONCERNING THE FUTURE LIFE

CONCERNING THE FUTURE LIFE

BY ARTHUR STEPHEN HOYT

II Tim. i, 10: "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The Apostle does not say that Christ gave us immortal life, but that He revealed such a life.

In fact belief in the future life has been almost as universal as belief in God. It might be called one of the instinctive, essential, universal faiths of the world.

From what we know of the earliest records and of primitive races, it is right to infer that the notion of an unseen world beyond daily life is coeval with the beginning of man. It is the way the first man met the problem of death. But the notions of the future life before Christianity, or beyond the reach of Christianity are very crude and vague. The primeval ghost world is at best a shadowy, gloomy region.

"Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,"

are the words Matthew Arnold puts into the mouth of Thor over the corpse of Balder. Even peoples of a high civilization like Egypt and Greece had gross, material ideas of the future. It has been hard for men to picture life separate from the body that we know, and the welfare of the spirit was connected with the proper rites of burial.

What is true of the childhood of the race is true of the childhood of every man. It is almost impossible for a little child to have a notion of death. Students of child life to-day tell us that "the child seems unable to think of life as ending at all."

Wordsworth was wiser than he knew when he made his little maid reply:

"O Master, we are seven."

"But they are dead: those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away: for still
The little maid would have her will
And said, "Nay, we are seven."

And this faith of the child in life has a wonderful way of persisting through the shattering of many ideals and the passing away of many fond beliefs. It seems to be a constant factor in the growth of life. An Ingersoll still speaks of life as between two eternities

and cherishes a deathless hope for those he loves.

The hope is not only true of the childhood of the race, but is coextensive with the history of human development. Many of the ideas are shadowy and even grotesque. The quiescence of Buddhism, the dismal world of Greek thought, the hideous features of Teutonic mythology are very unlike the beautiful hope of Christianity, but all witness to the general and abiding instinct of the human heart.

The great thinkers of the race have confessed their faith in immortality. "Be assured," said the dying *Socrates,* "that I trust to join the society not only of good men, but that I shall go to abide with God." *Cicero,* "the most humane, the most accomplished and enlightened, of all the Romans," argues before the Roman senate that death is only a change of abode. And *Emmanuel Kant,* the greatest of the moderns, speaks of the "moral law within as revealing to me a life independent of the animal kingdom, . . . which is not restricted by the conditions and limits of this life, but stretches out to eternity."

I need hardly say to you that the great *poets* have cherished the immortal hope.

Homer's future is a sad world, unlighted by moral ideas, yet the prophecy of better things. Through the pages of *Dante* "the eternal realities of another world were continually betraying their selves." *Shakespere's* contribution to the higher faith of the race is his revelation of the moral conflict of life, and the final triumph of goodness. *Wordsworth* speaks of

> The faith that looks thro' death.

Tennyson hoped to meet his Pilot face to face. And *Browning* was one who

> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

But I should give a wrong impression if I made the faith of such gifted souls the common hope of men. They were the seers, the men who had attained to heights of life and truth. They were touched with the light when the valleys were still in the shadows. But the shadows were not wholly dark, and men everywhere have had some dim thought of a world they could not see. The thought of the future world is an element in all great religions, a force in all great civilizations.

Whence comes this wide-spread belief, this all but universal hope? *Nature* gives sugges-

tions of it. The first thoughts came to man through the world he could see and touch, and we still draw lessons of hope from the life about us. Open the latest magazine on your table and you will find some hints of nature to feed the hope of life. More than 150 years ago Bishop Butler made a noble use of the analogy of nature. Life, he reasoned, is seen to persist through different and changing forms. The eagle in the shell and the eagle in the air,—how different the form and yet how the life persists! And it is no more difficult to think of man in these earthly bodies and man in a higher spiritual form. The presumption is in favor of continuous life unless there be some fatal interruption.

The force of Butler's argument is greatly increased by modern science. It teaches that all life has developed from a simple form—and the persistence of life. In evolution it is as natural for man to grow into the immortal life as to have attained erect posture and articulate speech. Nature says that the life of man will go on unless death stops it.

Can death put an end to the development of man's life? No man can prove that consciousness is the product of molecular motion, that thought and brain are one. Science can not prove immortality, but it has nothing

to say against it. Man's growth thus far inevitably suggests something better.

But the strongest suggestions of immortality are not from without but from within, not from nature but from the *spiritual experience of man.* Given the thought of God and the sense, however dim, that we are related to God, and we can not help believing in a future life. The thought will go beyond the barrier of time and place. Faith in immortality is faith in God. Lame hands of faith they are on the world's altar stairs, but still reaching up and calling to what seems to be Lord of all.

God is just, men say. His world must be one of order. Even from the half-built world of human life that we know, from its dust and scaffolding, we catch some glimpse of what the righteous God is doing. The selfish and the vainglorious shall not always have the first place. Men shall not always fatten on oppression nor the children cry for bread. God sits behind the shadow keeping watch above his own. The very inequalities of life now, the fact that every true man must admit, that human society is too earthly and blind to recognize and reward the best life, all point to a future where the moral order shall be supreme. When the disci-

pline shall be gained, a life shall open where there is perfect harmony.

God is true to His promise. His word can not fail. The hope that the best men have cherished from the very first: whence comes it? What can it be but the voice of God in the Soul? It must be more than the projection of the human mind, the vision of life to satisfy the craving of the heart. Must it not be the word of a faithful Creator, who can not deceive the creature of His hand!

And *God is good,* His work must go on to its perfection. We live in an unfinished world, and we have an unfinished world within. "Worlds yet remain unwritten," said Carlyle. What possibilities of life in each of us! We feel that the life of thought, of love, of duty is just begun. "I should like to live a thousand years," said Albert Barnes, looking off on the valleys of the Oriskany and Mohawk and thinking of the peoples that had marched westward and the results achieved in the fifty years since he graduated from college. "Greater things far are to be done in the future, and I should like to have a hand in them." It is the power of immortal youth that thus speaks, that is not to be cheated. The nobler the man the keener the sense of the unfinished life. "And

then something better will come," was Phillips Brooks' instinctive estimate of his own life. "Eternity bends over the unfinished life of man as the sky bends over the earth."

And then think of the love we have that makes the deepest and best things of life! How impossible for us to forget it or think of it as passing away! What Tennyson says of Arthur Hallam we say of our dear ones who have gone from our sight:

> I loved him and love him forever.

We believe in a loving God and so we believe that the sorrow of men shall be comforted and the severed friendships shall be knitted up. We know the moral worth of love, and we can trust the highest in the human heart and the highest in the universe.

These are instincts of the soul, often dim and misty strivings, but whither do they lead? Are they not like the weeds and driftwood and birds of a new continent?

> "In man's self arise
> August anticipations, symbols, types,
> Of a dim splendor ever on before,
> In that eternal circle life pursues."

"Immortality," said John Fiske, "is a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."

The argument so far is only a presumption in favor of belief in a future. It shows the belief to be natural and reasonable. It is the faith of the best minds and best moments of the race. But how shall the valleys of life be lighted up and the whole world flooded with the hope of the immortal life? How shall men everywhere know that they are born with the power of an endless life, and have the wider vistas and the larger measures of power and the higher encouragements to endeavor and virtue? Such a faith must be more than the refinement of human reason or the product of generations of mere human experience.

Men want a surer word of prophecy. They want to know a life so strong and triumphant that they can trust that life in face of all the hard and disturbing facts of the earth, a faith that shall not be disturbed by death itself. No human experience can give us the facts of the future life. Immortality belongs to the sphere of revealed religion. It *is Christ* who reveals the immortal life, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The Old Testament says little about the future life. That is not the purpose of its writers. It is the training of men to desire

and receive the life that Christ gives. It is the schoolmaster training the youth of the race. Everywhere we see the effort to make God known; by law and ritual, by pain and blessing, by social experience and by men of burning lips, to lift up the thought of God, to purify it and spiritualize it; to make God known as the holy and merciful One, the One to be adored and obeyed and served, the God of nations and the God of individual life.

There could be no true life without worthy thought of God; there could be no life worthy of immortality unless it could partake of the righteousness of God. And so everywhere by word and by example are found the lessons of reverence and trust, of love and obedience. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Here is the real contribution of the Old Testament to the doctrine of the future life, not in the few and scattered hints but in the training of the spiritual and moral life of men. Out of the profounder spiritual life rises the faith in the endless future. It is the life of the Psalmist rising into heaven that gives us the song:

"Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth:
But God is the strength of my heart, and
My portion for ever." (Ps. lxxiii, 25–26.)

It is the greatness of life in Job, the very suffering of life made a redemptive force, that gives the gleam of hope that lightens the darkness. "There is nothing in the Old Testament more sublime," says a recent writer, "than the gradual unveiling of the truth of immortality, disclosing itself in human consciousness like the breaking of the day over the earth."

Jesus Christ completes the messages of the Father. "But last of all he sent . . . his son." He tells us all we can know and all we need to know of a future life.

And in all this He carries out the method of the prophets, the revelation of truth through life. "In him is life; and the life was the light of men." He manifests God as Father, and shows that the future is involved in our relation to Him.

Christ Himself is the life and He helps men to the life that has no seed of corruption in it. "I am come that they might have life, and . . . have it more abundantly." He

everywhere assumes the possibility of a higher life and speaks to it, awakening the sense of need and desire that can never be content with the low condition and narrow limits of a corruptible life. If Christ had never said a word about heaven, He would have left the hope of heaven in the heart of every disciple. Heaven may be a place, but it is first of all a life. It is called by Christ the life of faith. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "This is life eternal (the deathless life), that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hadst sent." To have His trust in the holy and loving Father, to have the desire in all things to do His will, to have the life controlled by His thoughtfulness and sympathy and love,—such a life has the seed of divine growth—an ever unfolding, expanding, deathless life. "I can look forward to old age without dread," says the hero in the beautiful story "John Percyfield," "and can anticipate immortality with joy, for it will take eternity to do all the beautiful things I have in mind to do."

The final manifestation and proof of the future life is the RESURRECTION of Christ. It

is the culminating point of interest in the Gospel story, it is the recurring witness and power of the Apostolic word. We are begotten again "unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Christ is the living One and He is alive for evermore. "He could not be beholden of death." And every friend of Christ is bound up with Him. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." We are partakers of the same life. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." How constant the emphasis of the New Testament that "a life in personal fellowship with Christ and nourished by Him is always a life eternal; that the life of righteousness, unselfishness and usefulness never dies, but lives with an ever-increasing fullness!"

The future life is the great, shining hope of the New Testament, though the emphasis is everywhere laid upon the present life. The heavenly life is the unmistakable experience now, and its future blessedness is the perfection and fulfillment of the present promise.

While Christ gives us the facts of the future, His silence is also most significant. A few things we know, enough to comfort our sad hearts and to quicken our eager hopes—and the rest,—we must leave to Him who said "I go to prepare a place for you."

We know from Christ's words that it is a life of personal, conscious blessedness, free from the crippling and defeating influences of sin. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth . . . or maketh a lie." It is a life of personal recognition and social fellowship, where there shall be no lost good, nor broken ties, nor unhappy isolation. The familiar, homely figures of the family and the Father's house tell us that it is no gloomy realm of disembodied spirits, but a life of love and fellowship and heart-recompense.

It is a life of growth and of use, a limitless world opening to the understanding, a nobler service than we can now conceive engaging our willing spirits. Of one thing I am sure, it will be better than our fondest hope. It is implied in Him who has loved us with an everlasting love. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you

unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

"I would not if I could," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "stand at the open window and peer into the unknown beyond. I am sure that He whose mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening, who brings into every epoch of my life a new surprise, and wakes in every experience a new disclosure of His love, . . . has for me some future of glad surprise which I would not forecast if I could."

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

* * *

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I can not drift
Beyond his love and care."

We have no right to ignore the fact that in Christ's revelation of the future life a shadow rests upon the lot of the wicked. God is not mocked. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There can be no such thing as a harvest of eternal life for a man who sows unto his flesh. Many a life can

say with Helena Ritchie, in Mrs. Deland's powerful story, "Yes, I believe in hell, for that is what life is." A life that lives for self, whether the lower self of sensual desire, or the higher self of refined pleasure, regardless of God or the interests of others is sure to have failure and self-loathing at last. No man can make of life a lordly pleasure-house without at last being "Struck through with pangs of hell." Christ, the Immortal Love, has spoken some terrible words about sin and penalty. And none of us would think of questioning their reality. It is sin that makes the misery of the life here, and it is continued sin that makes the misery of the life hereafter. It is the law of habit that we grow in the direction of continual use. To make Christ the ideal of life is the path of moral ascent: to ignore Him is the path of moral decline. Is punishment wholly remedial, and in another life will all men be brought to their right mind and turn their steps towards the Father's house? Do we trust that somehow, good

> "Will be the final goal of ill
> That not one life shall be destroyed"?

We must also answer—

> "Behold, we know not anything."

Whatever hope we may cherish in our hearts, it would be well for us to be silent where Christ is silent and to have His supreme estimate of a life of goodness, and His judgment upon a life of sin. I would say with my teacher and colleague, Dr. Beecher: "Jesus does not teach that there is eternal punishment for temporary sinning. What He seems to teach is that there may be endless sinning, involving endless penalty."

Certainly the doom is to live on an endless and worthless life. We have no right with true immortality unless we are willing to practice it. It is the Father's house and only the children have a rightful and joyful life in its many mansions.

We should fear lest a promise being left us, we should fail to enter into His rest. We should live daily under the great motives of the unseen and eternal.

The revelation of the immortal life helps us to a true conception of values. Life is more than meat, character than circumstance. It sheds a heavenly light upon the path of duty, lifting the humblest act up into its divine significance, and furnishing the mightiest leverage for a righteous life. It brings the loftiest motive to bear upon achievement—giving the vision of faith, helping men to begin a work

for themselves and their fellow-men which the ages alone can finish. And from the tribulation which is the lot of every man, it brings the purest joy, making trials vicarious, partings but for a day, and death but the door into a higher life. "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "O grave, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

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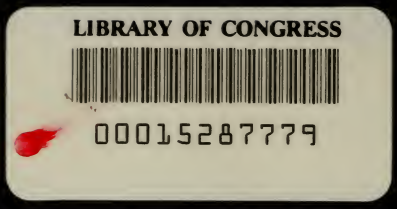
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